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San Diego QB Drew Brees

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SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2005

U.S. investigating wounding of freed Italian journalist in Iraq

Intel agent killed when U.S. troops fired on car at checkpoint

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Finding new jobs no sweat for injured vets

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Washington Post

Capt. Lonnie Moore, right, wounded in Iraq in April 2004 and expected to remain at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington through March, already has gotten a few job offers. Moore and 1st Lt. Stephen Rice from Godfrey, Ill., who was wounded in Iraq in December 2003, work together during a physical therapy session. Injured veterans are in high demand among contractors who say many of the skills acquired in the military are applicable in the private sector.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Blake murder trial: Jurors in the Robert Blake murder trial spent about 90 minutes deliberating before going home for the weekend.

They started their work Friday in Los Angeles after hearing the actor's lawyer, M. Gerald Schwartzbach, portray the prosecution's key witnesses as liars and accuse the police of rushing to judgment while bungling the investigation. Deliberations are scheduled to resume Monday.

Antichrist murder case: A father who said he murdered his son because he believed the 4-year-old was the Antichrist was sentenced Friday to life in prison without parole.

Ivan Henk pleaded guilty in Papillion, Neb., last month to first-degree murder, a crime he acknowledged during a 2003 court hearing when he shouted to the boy's mother that he killed Brendan Gonzalez, because he was the Antichrist. He had 666 on his forehead.

Tobacco lawsuit: A jury on Friday cleared tobacco maker Philip Morris of liability in the death of a man who smoked for 35 years and alleged the company misled him by failing to acknowledge the habit was addictive and caused cancer.

Fredrick Reller, 64, first sued Philip Morris in November 2001. A jury cleared the nation's biggest cigarette maker last August of negligence and misrepresentation in the lawsuit, but deadlocked on one count claiming the company fraudulently concealed the dangers of smoking.

Flight attendant bomb threat: An off-duty flight attendant accused of leaving a bomb note on an airplane has pleaded guilty to intentionally interfering with a flight crew, federal pro agreement that was filed Friday in federal prosecutors said Friday.

Prosecutor Debra T. Phillips said Gay Wilson accepted a plea agreement that was filed Friday in federal court in Nashville.

Gabor crash lawsuit: Zsa Zsa Gabor, who was seriously injured in a 2001 car crash, has settled her lawsuit against the driver for \$2 million, her attorney said Friday.

Gabor, 88, suffered broken bones in the November crash and received stitches to close wounds to her head, hands, arms and legs. The film and television actress was a passenger in the front seat of a car that struck a light pole on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood. The car was driven by her hairdresser, Jaren Millard, who suffered minor injuries.

Fla. right-to-life case: State welfare officials are investigating about 30 allegations that Michael Schiavo, abused, neglected or exploited his wife, Terri, the severely brain-damaged woman whose husband he has been fighting to end, according to a court document made public Friday.

In the petition filed last week, the state Department of Children & Families asked the judge who ordered Terri Schiavo's feeding tube removed on March 18 to postpone his order until the agency can investigate 34 pages of materials documenting the alleged abuse of Terri Schiavo.

Religious Gibson stalker: An Idaho drift-er claimed he was on a mission from God to pray with actor-director Mel Gibson was convicted of felony stalking Friday in Los Angeles.

Jurors deliberated for less than three hours before finding 34-year-old Zack Sin-



U.S. tsunami aid: Anna Gorski introduces four-month-old Tristan to his father, Petty Officer 1st Class Chad Gorski on Friday after the USS Abraham Lincoln pulled into its home port of Everett, Wash. It was the first time Gorski had seen his son in person, as he had been on-board the Lincoln since it left in October 2004 for a four-month deployment in the western Pacific. It was diverted in December to south Asia, where it was the hub of a relief operation to help victims of the devastating Dec. 26 tsunami.

clair guilty. He could face 3 years in prison.

Gruesome windshield death: An appeals court upheld the murder conviction of a woman who hit a homeless man with her car and then left him to die after he became lodged in her windshield.

The 2nd Court of Appeals in Fort Worth, Texas, upheld Chante Mallard's conviction Thursday. Her attorney had argued that the evidence was legally and factually insufficient to convict her in the death of Gregory Glenn Biggs.

Falwell hospitalization: The Rev. Jerry Falwell left a Lynchburg hospital Friday morning after a stay of almost two weeks while he battled pneumonia.

"I'm a little hoarse, but I'm alive and well and glad to hear from you," Falwell said from his Lynchburg home, where his family gathered Friday.

World

Iran nuclear program: Iran said Saturday it will never agree to permanently stop making nuclear fuel and warned that a more unstable Middle East would result from a bid to haul Tehran before the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions.

Any effort by Washington to bring Tehran's suspended uranium enrichment program under the Security Council scrutiny is a dangerous path, warned Hassan Rohani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator.

North Korea nuclear talks: The United States should meet one-on-one with North Korea to help revive stalled six-nation talks on the North's nuclear program, a Chinese official was Saturday quoted as saying.

"To restart negotiations and make progress, I hope Washington agrees to hold bilateral talks with Pyongyang," said Yang

Xiyu, director of the China Foreign Ministry's Office for Korean Peninsula Issues, according to the official newspaper China Daily.

War on terrorism

Training Iraqi troops: Germany will train 250 more Iraqi soldiers in the United Arab Emirates, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Saturday, signaling further cooperation with the United States from an ally that strongly opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Germany will send 70 military trainers to the United Arab Emirates in April and May for the new round of training, Schroeder said during a stop in Abu Dhabi, capital of the Emirates. Germany began training Iraqi forces last year, and has also schooled 440 Iraqi police officers in the Emirates.

Pakistan militants hunt: Pakistani troops raided a militant hide-out Saturday in a remote tribal area near Afghanistan, triggering a shootout that left two foreigners dead and 11 people arrested, an army spokesman said.

The troops also seized a large number of weapons in the raid near Miran Shah, the main town in northwest Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region, said Maj. Gen. Shaikat Sultan.

Guantanamo investigation: The commander of the U.S. detention center for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, said Friday he suspended three Army officers accused of "personal misconduct."

Brig. Gen. Jay W. Hood, commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, said he suspended two lieutenant colonels and one colonel and referred an allegation against a fourth officer to the Army.

The allegations do not involve detainees at Guantanamo, Hood said.

Stories and photo from wire services

Correction

In a story in Friday's editions about wounded reservists protesting poor health care, Army Deputy Surgeon General Maj. Gen. Joseph Webb was incorrectly identified.

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favorite comic strips every day



Free Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, top left, is carried off an aircraft at Ciampino military airport, in Rome, on Saturday. Sgrena returned to Italy hours after American troops in Iraq fired on the car she was in, wounding her and killing an Italian intelligence officer with her.

Free hostage home after incident with U.S. troops

U.S. military launches 'aggressive' investigation into shooting

By PATRICK QUINN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military said it launched an "aggressive" investigation into the shooting of an American journalist who was killed in the arms of an Italian journalist that had just been freed after a month as a hostage of Iraqi insurgents.

Giuliana Sgrena, 56, injured in the shooting near Baghdad airport, flew home to freedom Saturday, looking haggard and worn, after spending the night in a U.S. military hospital. She expressed sadness for the intelligence agent killed trying to shield her from the bullets.

President Bush expressed regret and promised to investigate the incident. The military said U.S. soldiers, not knowing the car was carrying Sgrena, fired after it failed to slow down.

But Bush's phone call late Friday to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi did little to allay anger in Italy, which has been holding its breath over Sgrena's fate for weeks. The shooting was likely to set off fresh protests against Berlusconi for keeping 3,000 troops in Iraq despite strong opposition.

"Another victim of an absurd war," said Alfonso Pecorearo Scanio, leader of the Green Party. A communist senator called for a protest Saturday in front of the U.S. Consulate in Milan.

Sgrena left Iraq after she was discharged from an American military hospital in Baghdad where she had been treated for shrapnel in the shoulder. Berlusconi was among those who greeted her in Rome, where she had to be helped off a small, private jet.

She was placed in an ambulance and was expected to undergo surgery on her collarbone.

Sgrena told colleagues at the leftist newspaper *Il Manifesto* that her captors never treated her badly, the Italian news agency ANSA reported.

Her brother, Ivan Sgrena, told reporters she was very happy to be back in Italy, but was "very sorry and sad" about the death of intelligence officer Nicola Calipari, who had negotiated her release.

"She's been tested, but she's alive. Finally, we've gotten to see her," said the journalist's father, Franco Sgrena.

Her arrival in Rome came as the Iraqi Shiite spiritual leader,

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called on bickering politicians in the clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance to set aside differences and form a government more than a month after landmark elections.

Leaders of the alliance met in central Baghdad to discuss a way out of Iraq's growing political impasse.

Alliance members meeting in central Baghdad agreed to try form a government and convene the 275-member National Assembly by March 15. Iraqis voted for the assembly on Jan. 30 and the alliance has already missed two previous target dates — March 1 and 6.

Ibrahim Mohamed Ali Bahar al-Olam, an alliance deputy, said they agreed the National Assembly would convene "no later than March 15."

Another deputy, Fattah al-Sheik said pressure would be put on interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi "and the Kurds" so that a cabinet would be ready by that date.

Allawi's party finished third with 40 seats in the assembly, compared to the alliance's 140 and the Kurdish coalition's 75. He has been trying to build his own coalition in an effort to keep his job.

Report says missile problems led to 3 friendly fire deaths

By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A number of problems with Patriot missile defenses and related systems contributed to three friendly fire deaths during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, according to a new Pentagon report, which nonetheless says the Patriots were "substantial success" during the fighting.

Patriots appear to have shot down nine incoming Iraqi short-range ballistic missiles during the invasion, says a summary of the report.

But Patriot batteries also misidentified and shot down an American and a British fighter in separate incidents, leaving three air crew members dead. A Patriot system also mistakenly tracked another U.S. fighter, which bombed a radar in Iraq.

The incidents took place in March and April 2003. The report, posted on a military Web site this week, was authored by a task force of the Defense Science Board, which advises Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld on a range of issues.

In general, the report attributes the friendly fire incidents to the technical difficulty of tracking a single incoming missile among the hundreds of friendly aircraft that flew sorties during the early part of the war. Specifically, it pointed to three shortfalls.

■ Well-known, but still uncorrected, problems with a system called IFF, for "identification friend or foe," that aircraft carry to identify them to American and allied systems as friendly.

Patriots should be restricted from firing at aircraft broadcast- ing a friendly signal, but the shoot-down of the British aircraft in particular was blamed on faulty IFF.

"This is not exactly a surprise; the radar performance has been seen in many training exercises."

The Task Force (that authored the report) remains puzzled as to why this deficiency never turns enough resolve and support to result in a robust fix," the report says.

■ Overall problems with the ability of missile defense systems and other ground-based and airborne radars to pass information to one another, which leaves Patriots crew members in the dark about the total picture in the skies.

■ The communication links, the ability to correlate target tracks by disparate sensors, and the overall information architecture are simply not there. Thus, a Patriot battery on the battlefield can be very much along the report says.

■ An over-reliance by crew members and commanders on Patriot computers, rather than their own intuition. Patriot crews are trained for situations where they face a rain of missiles, not one filled with a few missiles mixed in among friendly aircraft.

— The Associated Press

a few missiles mixed in among friendly aircraft.

Previously, U.S. Central Command officials said Patriots downed at least 10 of the 17 missiles fired at Kuwait. Why the Pentagon report claims one less missile was killed is unclear, although it says that all nine missiles that entered an area protected by Patriots were shot down.

"In an overall sense, the Task Force assessed the Patriot missile defense in [Operation Iraqi Freedom] to be a substantial success," the report says.

During the 1991 Gulf War, the military and Raytheon, the Patriot's manufacturer, claimed high success — up to 80 percent — with earlier versions of the Patriot. Congress's General Accounting Office later found Patriots intercepted no more than four of 47 Iraqi Scud missiles, a 9 percent success rate. The Pentagon has spent more than \$3 billion improving the Patriots since then.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, March 4, 2005, at least 1,507 members of the U.S.

military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,142 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department.

The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is twelve higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,369 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,033 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

- One soldier was killed Friday in a vehicle accident near Tikrit, Iraq.
- Four soldiers were killed Friday in Anbar province, Iraq.

The latest identifications reported by the military or family:

- Army Spc. Seth Garceau, 22, Oelwein, Iowa; died Friday from injuries received

in an explosion Sunday while traveling between Karbala and Ramadi, en route to the National Guard's 224th Engineer Battalion, Burlington, Iowa.

- Army Spc. Azhar Ali, 27, and Army Spc. Wai P. Lwin, 27, of New York; killed Wednesday in Baghdad when an explosive detonated near their vehicle; assigned to the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, New York.

Documents: GIs videotaped Iraq prison abuse

BY RICHARD A. SERRANO
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — In a twist on the offensive photograph that inflamed the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, a separate group of U.S. soldiers in Iraq shot a video of themselves beating prisoners and using the body of a dead Iraqi to "wave hello," according to documents released Friday.

The digital video disc, which soldiers derisively titled "Ramadi Madness," a reference to a turbulent city in Iraq's Sunni Triangle, prompted an internal Army investigation of the Florida National Guard troops from West Palm Beach who were involved. The video was brought to the attention of Army supervisors by a civilian public affairs employee in Florida.

da who expressed disgust after viewing the scenes of soldiers reveling among beaten and dead Iraqi combatants.

The internal investigation determined that the footage "contained inappropriate rather than criminal behavior," according to military records. Investigators later determined that the DVD was destroyed by an officer who learned of the internal investigation. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, no criminal charges were ever filed.

The investigation was among thousands of new pages of military documents the ACLU obtained in a lawsuit seeking information on detention practices. The Army turned over the information to the ACLU, also releasing the documents Friday to reporters at the Pentagon. The

ACLU issued descriptions of the documents.

The ACLU said the descriptions of the video and other new Army documents raise fresh concerns about whether the military is seriously concerned with prisoner abuse, nearly a year after the first revelations that prison guards and interrogators mistreated detainees at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib compound near Baghdad.

"Pieces of the puzzle are still missing," said ACLU Executive Director Anthony D. Romero, noting that none of the Pentagon's top civilian officials have been implicated or punished. "An outside special commission is the only way to ensure that all civilians who violated, or conspired to violate, the laws are held responsible for their crimes."

The Pentagon has resisted an outside review but said Friday that it would deal with deficiencies in its prison facilities.

"The Army remains committed to addressing identified problems in detainee operations," Army officials said in a prepared statement.

According to the files, the DVD was a recording of Florida National Guard activities in Iraq between 2003 and 2004. The soldiers were identified as being from B Company, 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment.

The scenes included shots of soldiers kicking a prisoner wearing plastic handcuffs who was on the ground and moaning after apparently being shot in the abdomen. He had been shot after allegedly wielding a gun against American soldiers during a raid, the Army documents said.

According to the ACLU, the prisoner later died.

In another videotaped scene, a soldier appeared to be hitting a bound prisoner in the head with a rifle butt as interrogators were attempting to question him. The prisoner was apparently detained for throwing rocks at a U.S. military convoy, according to the descriptions.

One soldier told interrogators that the rifle-butt was actually only a staged event and that the prisoner was never struck.

A third scene showed a soldier trying to wave the hand of a dead Iraqi at the camera after the Iraqi had been shot to death in a truck at a U.S. checkpoint. The soldier told investigators he was only repositioning the body because there was concern over a possible missile inside the truck.

Soldier's defense opposing use of diary in murder trial

BY ESTES THOMPSON
The Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Lawyers for Sgt. Hasan Akbar, charged in a fatal grenade attack on two officers in Kuwait, urged a military judge Friday to keep diary entries written six years before he enlisted in the Army out of his murder trial.

The request came during a motions hearing in the case, as prosecutors argued the 27 diary entries show "intent, plan, motive" for the March 2003 attack at Camp Pennsylvania, days after the start of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

The military judge overseeing the case, Col. Stephen Henley, expressed skepticism.

"Statements from 1997?" he asked prosecutor Capt. John Benson.

"I think it's highly relevant to how this case is shaping up," Benson replied.

Akbar, 33, is accused of stealing grenades from a Humvee and using them and a firearm in an attack on fellow members of the 101st Airborne Division. Army Capt. Christopher Seifert, 27, and Air Force Maj. Gregory Stone, 40, were killed; 14 other soldiers were injured.

If convicted of two counts of premeditated murder and three counts of attempted premeditated murder, Akbar could get the death penalty.

Maj. David Coombs, a defense lawyer, said his client's diary entries have no relationship to the military or the attack.

Although the entries were not read in court, Coombs argued it was clear the 1992 entry that what Akbar was "talking about is not getting any respect."

Another entry refers to frustration over Akbar's inability to get a date with a certain

woman, he said, a third apparently was written after his brother joined the military.

Coombs said the prosecution was taking statements out of context to make it appear Akbar planned the attack for years before he joined the Army.

Henley said he would rule later on a defense motion to block the statements.

Although Akbar has been diagnosed with sleep apnea and has nodded off during past court sessions, he did not appear to have trouble staying awake during Friday's two-hour hearing.

Akbar told the judge that his Denver-based civilian lawyer, Wazir Ali Muhammad, Al-Haq,

planned to withdraw from the case because he has not been paid. Akbar told the judge his mother might be able to help with payments, although he added that he does not mind being represented by his military lawyers.

And defense lawyer Maj. Dan Brookhart urged Henley to bar prosecutors from showing jurors gruesome autopsy photos, saying they would prejudice the panel against Akbar.

Akbar has confessed several times to the attack and his lawyers plan to use an insanity or diminished capacity defense in his trial, so the defense does not intend to contest how Seifert and Stone died, Brookhart said.

He objected to showing jurors a photo of organs removed from a victim and another showing a victim laid in a body bag with bloody boots and medical equipment taped to his face.



Akbar

Fighting fires in Mosul



A fireman puts out flames after gunmen attacked an oil tanker and killed the Turkish driver in Mosul, Iraq, on Saturday. Witnesses said the assailants began shooting afterwards, saying they belonged to al-Qaida in Iraq and that they shot the driver because he was carrying supplies to American troops.

Report: 90 sites subject to U.N. inspection looted

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Satellite imagery has revealed that approximately 90 sites in Iraq subject to U.N. inspection and monitoring were subject to looting of equipment or razed, the chief U.N. weapons inspector said in a report Friday.

Demetrios Periclos said experts from the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, which he leads, also

noted repairs and new construction at 10 sites.

The commission, known as UNMOVIC, previously reported the looting and razing of sites that contained equipment and materials that were subject to inspection because of their potential for use in chemical or biological weapons or to launch cruise missiles to deliver them. Friday's report to the U.N. Security Council was the first to provide information on the extent of the dis-

appearance and destruction.

While the U.S.-led coalition is in Iraq and the chief U.S. arms hunter Charles Duelfer found no evidence of weapons programs, the insecurity in the country — and the disappearance of equipment and the reappearance of some pieces in scrapyards in Jordan and the Netherlands — has raised concerns.

U.N. inspectors checked 411 sites in the months before they left Iraq ahead of the

U.S.-led war in March 2003. The U.S. government has barred the inspectors from returning, but UNMOVIC experts have acquired and analyzed post-war satellite imagery of 353 sites, "including those considered the most important," the report said.

Experts determined that 70 of the sites sustained bomb damage, the commission said, and about 90 of the 353 sites with sensitive equipment and materials were stripped or razed.

Former soldiers back in uniform for Iraq



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

From left, Spc. Antonette Jackson, Spc. Shonda Humphrey and Spc. Steven Sena and Master Sgt. Lisa Turner, Army reservists with the 326th Postal Platoon, wait for a helicopter transport at Forward Operating Base Specifier in Tikrit, Iraq. Turner, Humphrey and Sena were activated for duty under the Individual Ready Reserve program, under which former active-duty soldiers can be called back for service.

Individual Ready Reserve members talk about being back in the military

BY CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

TIKRIT, Iraq — You're in the Army now.

Make that "again."

"The old uniform fit a little tight," Sgt. Brian Walker said. "Luckily, they issued me four new sets."

Walker is one of 5,600 people, many of whom hadn't worn a military uniform in years, taken from civilian life and activated under the Individual Ready Reserve program.

Last summer, the Pentagon announced it was calling up the civilians because there were not enough reservists, guardsmen or active-duty troops to fill certain duty slots, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Walker, an immigration officer from Swanton, Vt., left the Army in 1998 but signed up for the IRR program in exchange for a \$5,900 per year. Now it's payback time.

"It's kind of ironic," said Walker. "Me and my wife waited 10 years to have children in case of a deployment." They now have a 5-year-old daughter.

In justifying the call-up, Gen. Richard A. Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff, told Congress last summer it was the "worst-case" deployment plans after the rise in violence in Iraq.

David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, was quoted by Stars and Stripes last year as saying the IRR "is part of the obligation that each entrant in the military assumes. The fact that it is rare that we call up the Individual Ready Reservist does not, of course, mean that it is inappropriate."

Some IRR members were activated for the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, Chu said.

Walker, a member of the 376th Personnel Services Battalion, said he chose to join the ready reserves for the money after he left active duty.

Others, such as Spc. Steven Sena, of Albuquerque, N.M., were called up as part of an eight-year obligation he incurred for enlisting in the military. Sena served for two years, which automatically made him eligible for activation over the next six years.

"I'm still not happy I got called back, especially when they don't need us," said Sena of the 326th Postal Platoon. "They could have called up other people in our place who wanted to go."

Shonda Humphrey, who left the Army in May 2001, was also called back for a tour in Iraq.

Humphrey, a single mother with chil-

dren ages 6, 4 and 3, became Spc. Humphrey, assigned to the 326th, after receiving her alert notice last August. She has chosen to look at the bright side of her one-year call to duty.

"Since I'm here I might as well learn postal operations, since they reclassified me as postal," said Humphrey, a payroll administrator from Montgomery, Ala., whose obligation to the Army would have expired in May. "Maybe I'll go home and get a good postal job."

Humphrey's three children are being cared for by her fiancé, who is not the children's father, and her sister.

"I try not to talk to [the children] every day because they get sad," Humphrey said. "But as far as my fiancé and sister, I talk to them just about every day."

Master Sgt. Lisa Turner, the 326th's platoon sergeant, was also shown when she got her call-up letter in July.

"At first it was a shock to receive my orders," Turner said. "Then Sena and I went through training at Camp McGrady [S.C.]. For me, it was pretty motivating."

Turner said she was getting an increase in her pension because of the call-up.

Turner, an administrative assistant at the University of Maine at Farmington, says she gets lots of love from the folks on campus.

"As liberal as they are, and as much as they hate the war, they're still supportive of me; they send their letters and notes," said Turner, a mother of five daughters (two of whom are married) and granddaughter of two. Her husband, Louis, now has to hold down the household fort.

As postal specialists in Iraq, the soldiers have several duties. They break down pallets of incoming mail for troops in Iraq and push it to outlying bases, help customers at base post offices, and prepare outgoing mail for the States.

Sena, an estimator for a paint contracting company, suffers from the same heartache as the deployed reservists, guardsmen and active-duty troops in Iraq who are used to wearing a uniform on a regular basis.

His son, Isaiah, recently turned 1. Isaiah was just 5 months old when his father left for the seven-month retraining program that ready reservists must undergo, making his actual time away from home 19 months.

"It's just difficult because you wonder if he's going to know you're his dad when you return," Sena said.

Mail Charlie Coon at: coon@mail.estripes.com

War equipment to remain in Iraq once troops leave

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Most of the equipment U.S. Marines are using in Iraq will be left behind once the troops withdraw from the region, the assistant commandant of the corps said this week.

"The bulk of that equipment, by the time we see the end of this, will be best left there and just replaced," Gen. William Nyland said during testimony before Congress. "I don't think it will ever come home."

Most of the equipment used by Marines

in Iraq was brought to that country during initial combat operations, Nyland said. Personnel have used vehicles and aircraft left by their predecessors, rather than bringing their own equipment.

Heavy use, combined with the harsh environment in Iraq and "unavoidable delays" in routine maintenance, have left much of the gear degraded, according to Corps officials. For example, CH-46 helicopters in Iraq are currently flying at about 2.5 times their normal peacetime rate.

Nyland's comments came as members

from all four services responded to criticism from members of the House Armed Services Committee that too many predictable expenses — such as equipment replacement and maintenance — was included in the defense supplemental budget requests.

Members argued that the \$82 billion proposal should be reserved for unexpected and emergency expenses related to the war on terror.

Gen. Richard Cody, vice chief of staff for the Army, said he believes many of the service's modernization efforts included in this year's supplemental will be shifted to

the standard budget process in 2007, but that Corps officials are focused on getting new equipment and improvements to deployed troops as quickly as possible.

He also said that many of the Army's vehicles could be left behind in Iraq once U.S. operations there end. Equipment will either be scrapped or sold to Iraqi military officials, and U.S. Army officials will purchase new replacements.

But about 4,000 vehicles in Iraq will be returned to the United States over the next year for maintenance and upgrades, Cody said.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@stripes.com

3rd ID back for round two in Baghdad

GI's who first captured capital find a different enemy

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Their enemy has changed, from Iraqi soldiers in uniform to insurgents in civilian clothes. But for the soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division returning to Baghdad, some things remain the same.

The smell, for instance — a mixture of smog, rotting garbage and sewage.

"It's only here, it's only in Iraq," said Staff Sgt. Jason Barr of Roswell, Mich.

Nearly two years after they first entered Baghdad, the Fort Stewart, Ga.-based 3rd Infantry is back in Iraq, taking charge of the Baghdad metropolitan area. While some of the soldiers are here for the first time, most were part of the invasion and capture of Baghdad in April 2003.

Sgt. Joshua Butler of Jackson, Mo., is a team leader in A Co. 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment. His company, code-named Attack, was among the first to roll into Baghdad and spent four months in Iraq in 2003. But

oucked, in an old barracks in south Baghdad, he said he feels as though he never left.

"The last time I was here, my guard was up 24/7 and I went back home and everything relaxed and it was fine," Butler said. "Now we're back and that feeling is there again all of a sudden."

Butler's life, like that of many of the returning soldiers, has changed since the invasion. He has been promoted from private first class to sergeant. He has married, has a child and owns a house.

"I'm responsible now for bringing home my guys alive to their family," he said.

The quick redeployment to Iraq takes a toll on families.

"Just as you begin to get relaxed and get back into a normal rhythm with your family, it starts all over again, the pressure of getting ready to leave again," said Barr, a father of two.

"The few months before you leave are hard; the first few months after you get back are hard."

The soldiers say what they fear

most this time around are roadside bombs.

Patrolling southern Baghdad will be more dangerous this time around, said Spc. Jacob Pfister of Buffalo, N.Y., because the insurgents fight from the shadows.

"In a direct firefight, we've got them hands down. But what you have to worry about is what you don't see, driving up and a guy has got a bomb on the side of the road," Pfister said.

The one thing all the soldiers agree on is that the living conditions are much better now. Instead of sleeping on sidewalks, they live two to a room in a barracks with running water and electricity. They eat hot meals in a mess hall run by KBR, a U.S. contractor, instead of prepackaged meals.

But while life is more comfortable inside the garrison walls, with a television in almost every room, outside a war is still raging.

The last time the 3rd Infantry was in Baghdad, it entered with overwhelming force, fighting sustained urban combat from April 7-11, 2003. Their square patch



Young Iraqi students glance back at U.S. soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division as they conduct foot patrol at Fallujah in June 2003. Nearly two years after they first entered Baghdad, the 3rd Infantry is back in Iraq, taking charge of the Baghdad metropolitan area.

with diagonal stripes became known as "the Death Patch" among Iraqis.

Capt. Ike Saltee, the 30-year commander of Attack company, served as a staff officer during the invasion and he said the mission in Iraq now is much more complicated.

"Iraq doesn't look different on the surface," said Saltee of Kissimmee, Fla. But "the threat is more dangerous now because of the unpredictability of the enemy."

He said the division will try to strike a balance — to make the insurgents fear his men, and instill hope in civilians.

Protecting Afghanistan aid mission



CLAUDIA K. BULLARD/Courtesy of U.S. Army

A soldier from the Quick Reaction Force based at Kandahar airfield, Afghanistan, maintains security during a recent humanitarian aid mission in snowy Central Afghanistan. They accompanied Afghan doctors to give vaccinations for 160 children during a recent whooping cough outbreak. Many of the villagers in the area had not yet had a glimpse of U.S. service personnel due to their remote location. The team is from the 2nd Battalion, 35 Infantry Regiment, part of the 25th Infantry Division based in Hawaii.

Guardsmen set to be court-martialed

GI accused of murdering Iraqi police officer

The Associated Press

FORT KNOX, Ky. — An Indiana National Guard soldier accused of murdering an Iraqi police officer will be court-martialed, the Army announced Friday.

Cpl. Dustin Berg, 21, is accused of killing Hussein Kamel Hadi Darwoud Al-Dabeidi south of Baghdad in November 2003, then shooting himself. Berg, of Ferdinand, Ind., received a Purple Heart for wounds sustained in the incident.

An investigator testified during an Article 32 hearing last month that Berg changed his story multiple times before admitting he killed the police officer. Special agent Clarence Joubert of the Army Criminal Investigative Division said Berg initially

said he was shot by a man in a red turban and white shirt.

Berg's attorney said at the hearing, which is similar to a civilian grand jury hearing, that his client acted in self-defense.

Maj. Gen. Terry Tucker, the commanding general at Fort Knox, determined that sufficient evidence exists for the case to move forward, public affairs officer Connie Shaffery said. A date for the court-martial has not been set.

Berg is charged with murder, false swearing and the wearing of an unauthorized award.

Berg received a Purple Heart during a ceremony in February 2004, the month he returned home from Iraq. The Indiana National Guard has declined to release the citation describing why the Purple Heart was awarded to Berg.

Insurgents still an obstacle to reconstruction effort in Iraq

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The rebuilding of Iraq has gained fresh momentum in recent weeks, but violence by insurgents remains a threat to the work in the months ahead, the Pentagon official overseeing most of the reconstruction said Friday.

"While I'm encouraged, I certainly don't think the worst is over," said Charles Hess, director

of the Iraq Project and Contracting Office in Baghdad, which is responsible for \$13.7 billion of the \$18.4 billion that Congress approved in November 2003 for rebuilding the country.

"My suspicion is that the insurgents will regroup and try to figure out other ways to get at the heart of the infrastructure," Hess said in a video-teleconference with reporters at the Pentagon.

"But for right now I think progress can be made," especial-

ly in the less volatile areas.

Part of the additional work done recently has been in Fallujah, the city west of Baghdad where U.S. forces cleared out insurgent strongholds in November, allowing a resumption of reconstruction projects that had been suspended for months due to the violence.

Hess said that about \$3.6 billion of the \$18.4 billion has been spent. That is more than double the \$1.7 billion in expenditures he

reported four months ago.

Much of the money has been spent on things other than the rebuilding of Iraq's decrepit infrastructure, however. Bill Taylor, director of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, said in the news conference with Hess that the largest single category of work so far has been the equipping of Iraqi security and law enforcement officers.

The second-biggest component of the \$3.6 billion was for electric-

ity projects, he said. He did not provide dollar estimates for either category.

Nationally, power plants as of Thursday were generating 3,850 megawatts of electricity a day, Hess said. That figure fluctuates daily and compares with actual electricity demand of about 8,000 megawatts, according to Brig. Gen. Thomas Bostick, the senior Army Corps of Engineers officer in the Persian Gulf region.

IN THE WORLD

Israel pullout dispute

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said Saturday he cannot impose law and order in the Palestinian areas until Israel hands over control of West Bank cities, and he urged it to return to talks concerning their transfer.

Israel had promised to hand over five cities following a Feb. 8 cease-fire declaration but suspended talks after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed five Israelis at a Tel Aviv night club last weekend.

Abbas, Palestinian officials said, will go to Washington within the next 10 days to meet President Bush.

Ukraine suicide case

KIEV, Ukraine — Former President Leonid Kuchma cut his vacation short and returned to Ukraine on Saturday following the apparent suicide of his former interior minister, who faced questioning in the killing of a journalist investigating corruption under Kuchma.

The former president, who has been linked by opponents to the journalist's slaying, made no comments in the Kiev airport upon returning from a Czech Republic spa. But before departing the Czech Republic, Kuchma said he was prepared to talk to prosecutors, Czech and Ukrainian television reported.

Bombing anniversary

MADRID, Spain — Spain's King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia will visit a memorial grove of cypress and olive trees known as the "Forest of the Absent" next week as the nation observes a day of mourning on the first anniversary of the Madrid train bombings.

Church bells will ring around 7:40 a.m., the time on March 11 that bombs exploded on packed commuter trains during the rush hour in Spain's worst terrorist attack, and Spaniards will be asked to observe five minutes of silence at noon.

The Spanish flag will fly at half staff on all public buildings and half mast on ships of the Spanish navy, said Deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega.

From The Associated Press

Syria expected to pull Lebanese troops back

By BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Thousands of Syrians supporting their leader and denouncing the United States and Israel packed a square outside parliament Saturday to hear President Bashar Assad's expected announcement to pull back his troops in Lebanon closer to the Syrian border.

Assad's announcement, expected to be made during a rare speech to the 250-member chamber, is seen as a bid to ease incessant Arab and U.S.-led international pressure regarding the presence of 15,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon and the risk of isolation.

But even before Assad outlined his position, President Bush rejected anything but a full withdrawal as unacceptable.

The crowd of about 3,000 gathered outside the parliament to cheer the president as he arrived.

The protesters chanted, "One, one, one, Syria and Lebanon are one" and "Bush, Bush, listen, the Syrian people will not bow."

In the Lebanese capital of Beirut, several hundred Lebanese flag-waving protesters gathered at the central Martyrs Square, keeping up the daily anti-Syrian campaign that has drawn tens of thousands since the Feb. 14 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Many Lebanese blame Syria and the Lebanese government in the killing, but both deny involvement.

About 2.5 miles away, more



A Lebanese opposition protester carries an anti-Syria banner, during daily demonstrations against Syria in Beirut, Lebanon, on Friday.

than 50 Lebanese troops deployed near the Syrian intelligence headquarters in Beirut in what officers said was a precautionary action to provide security and prevent any acts of intimidation against the Syrians.

The night before, a concussion bomb was tossed from a moving car at a Syrian military post in Baalbek, eastern Lebanon, exploding but causing no casualties, security officials said.

Assad's unscheduled address comes after a rough week, beginning with the resignation of his allied government in Lebanon and ending with the Saudi Crown

Prince Abdullah telling him face-to-face to get all his forces out of Lebanon quickly.

Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Walid Moualem believes Assad will announce a pullback of his country's troops in his speech, his first to the parliament in two years.

In Moscow, Moualem told Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that Syrian and Lebanese leaders have agreed on an action plan for carrying out the 1989 Arab brokered Taif Accord. But he would not say when.

The accord calls for Syria to move its troops in Lebanon to the border, then for both countries to negotiate their withdrawal.

Politician: Syria nuke comment just a joke

The Associated Press

DALLAS — A Dallas-area congressman raised eyebrows with his recent offer to personally drop a couple of nuclear bombs on Syria.

But Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Texas, told The Dallas Morning News for a story in Friday's editions that he was "kind of joking" in his comments at a pancake breakfast at a North Texas church.

The Feb. 19 remarks at the Suncoast United Methodist Church in Allen were first reported this week in Roll Call. The Capitol Hill newspaper reported it had heard a recording of the talk made by an unidentified person in attendance.

According to Roll Call, Johnson said he was talking with President Bush and Rep. Kay Granger, a Fort Worth Republican, at the White House about weapons of mass destruction that U.S. troops had failed to find in Iraq.

According to Roll Call, Johnson said he told the president: "Syria is the problem. Syria is where those weapons of mass destruction are, in my view. You know, I can fly an F-15, put two nukes on 'em and I'll make one pass. We won't have to worry about Syria anymore."

Johnson, 74, is a former Air Force pilot who served in the wars in Korea and Vietnam, where he was shot down and spent 7½ years as a prisoner of war.

Pope to give silent blessing

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II met with a top cardinal and sent messages to students and Italy's premier Saturday, re-informing the Vatican's stance on Sunday of a pope who is alert and attending to church business even as he recovers from his latest health crisis.

The Vatican said the frail, 84-year-old pontiff again would give a silent blessing on Sunday from a window of Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital, where he is getting breathing and speech therapy after throat surgery to ease his second respiratory crisis in a month.

"John Paul II will join the Angelus prayer from his hospital room, and at the end he will bless the faithful present at Gemelli Polyclinic the same way as last Sunday," papal spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls said in a statement.

John Paul made a surprise window appearance at the hospital a week ago.

Navarro-Valls said Archbishop Leonardo Sandri — an Argentine from the Holy See's secretary of state office who has become the pope's closest confidant — would read out the traditional weekly prayer known as the Angelus and deliver a blessing to believers gathered at St. Peter's Square.

Although the pope can barely speak, and his voice from his hospital room, and at the end he will bless the faithful present at St. Peter's Square. The Vatican has said it is possible the pope could be released in time for Easter on March 27.

On Saturday, the Holy See reinforced the idea of the pope staying abreast of world affairs despite his illness. It said he sent messages of condolence to Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi and the family of Nicola Calipari, an intelligence agent killed by U.S. fire in Iraq while escorting freed Italian hostage Giuliana Sgrena to safety.

The Vatican has said it is possible the pope could be released in time for Easter on March 27.

Poland gathers to remember thousands massacred by Soviets

By ELA KASPRZYCKA

The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poles gathered in Warsaw on Saturday on the 65th anniversary of the Soviet order that led to a massacre of 21,000 Polish officers and intellectuals by the secret police, calling on Russian and Polish leaders to reveal the names of those responsible for the killings.

At a Mass in Warsaw's St. Ann's Church, the Katyn Committee, an organi-

zation of relatives of those killed in the Katyn forest and at other sites, demanded more Russian attention to the massacre. A recent Russian investigation failed to produce any new names of suspects.

"We are calling on the authorities of the Russian Federation to reveal the names of those who were responsible for the genocide in the spring of 1940," said Stefan Melak, the head of the group.

"We are calling on Russian authorities

to accept this crime as genocide."

"Katyn will always remain a symbol of a death sentence passed on Poland," he said. The March 5, 1940, order for the massacre was signed by Soviet leader Josef Stalin among others. Soviet agents shot 21,768 Polish military officers, intellectuals and priests who were taken prisoner when the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1939.

Historians in Poland believe Stalin ordered the killings to liquidate Poland's elite in order to prevent the rebirth of a sov-

ereign Polish state.

The massacre is still an irritant to relations between Poland and Russia. Polish war crimes prosecutors opened their own investigation into the massacre in December.

The slaughter became known to the world when 4,100 bodies were discovered by German forces in 1943 after they overran the area near Smolensk, in western Russia, and the event was widely broadcast by the Nazi propaganda machine.

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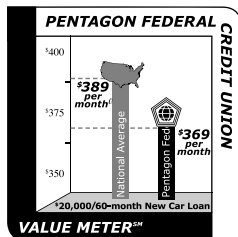


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France struggles with 'the horror of horror'

Nation, town try to cope with massive pedophilia scandal

BY VERENA VON DERSCHAU

The Associated Press

ANGERS, France — The colorful playgrounds and prim plantings of this working-class housing complex seem to have hidden a grim secret for years. Inside, prosecutors say, parents allegedly raped, abused and pimped their children — some not yet old enough to walk.

Well-maintained, modern and inviting, the three-story apartment buildings of the Saint-Leonard neighborhood in the western town of Angers were designed to make life in low-income housing civilized.

But some of the residents who moved in after it opened in 1998 are accused of terrible acts.

Sixty-six people have gone on trial this week for crimes of pedophilia that have stunned France. The case, coming on the heels of another high-profile pedophilia trial in northern France last year, has prompted renewed soul-searching about how people could sink so low in a country that prides itself as an economic and political leader of Europe.

Investigators say 45 children — ages from 6 months to 14 years — were abused by their parents or people close to them from 1999 to 2002, in some cases in exchange for small amounts of money, food, cigarettes or alcohol. A grandfather of



An unidentified suspect hides upon arrival at the courthouse in Angers, western France, on Friday. It was the second day of trial of 66 people accused of involvement in the rape, sexual abuse and prostitution of dozens of children and babies.

some of the children allegedly filmed rapes and other abuse.

The trial's second day Friday was devoted to presenting the more than 200 witnesses to the court.

In Angers, known for its medieval castle and Cointreau liquor, some residents

refuse to accept that such crimes could be perpetrated in their midst. Angers' Deputy Mayor Michelle Moreau said.

"I've heard people say to me, 'But you know, these children were used to it,' she said. "It's the horror of horror."

The trial is expected to last four months.

But getting over the horror could take far longer.

French newspapers in recent days have been full of questions by child psychologists and columnists asking how something so ghastly and so enormous could have gone undetected so long.

Part of the explanation was the tight-knit nature of the ring — husbands forced wives and parents forced children, lawyers said.

"We're talking about family networks. There is a code of silence, a family law takes over," said Jacques Monier, a lawyer who represents 11 child victims. "And the children do not talk."

Defense attorney Monique Vimont described her client, one of the principal defendants, as "a woman worn out by life," who was beaten by her husband and pressured to commit crimes against children. Under French law, the defendants cannot be named, to protect the identities of their alleged child victims.

The case came to light in 2000, when a 16-year-old girl alleged she had been raped by her mother's boyfriend and his brother.

Alcoholism, poverty and defense lawyers claim, a failure of social workers to spot signs of abuse may have played a role. More than half of the accused, ages 27 to 73, were unemployed, living off benefits in state-supported housing. Some of the accused were abused themselves as children, defense attorneys say.

"The person I'm defending sits in the box next to his father, who is the perpetrator of sexual acts on him only years ago — and now is his accomplice," said Pascal Bessier, an attorney who represents five defendants.

Wrist video puts intel at Israeli army's fingertips

The Associated Press

HOLON, Israel — Israeli troops now are sporting gear that Dick Tracy would be proud of: tiny video screens, worn on the wrist, which display video shot by unmanned airplanes.

Similar screens have been in use for close to a year in the Israeli military's attack helicopters, helping pilots identify and strike Palestinian militants within seconds.

The technology, which also is in use in tanks and armored vehicles, was a closely guarded secret until the company that developed it offered reporters a rare glimpse at the system this week.

"We are fulfilling the science fiction movies that we see," said Itzhak Benit, chief executive of the Elira Group's Tadiran Electronic Systems and Tadiran Spectralink companies.

Beni said the communications system has "shortened tremendously" the amount of time it takes to



An employee of Tadiran Spectralink Ltd. displays a new model of wrist-monitor at a Tadiran plant in Cholon, Israel.

identify and strike a target.

"Before it was minutes, 10 to 12 minutes. Now it's a matter of seconds," he said.

Israel agreed to halt its policy of "targeted killings" under an informal cease-fire declared last month by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas. But after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed five Israelis last week, Israel said it would consider resuming the practice.

The Israeli army declined to comment about the new technology.

Bootleg liquor death toll rises

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Seven more people have died after drinking a bootleg liquor, bringing the death toll this week to 15, officials and news reports said Friday.

Four people died in hospitals after drinking the fake raki, a popular misle-flavored drink, in Istanbul this week, health officials said early Friday. The Anatolia news agency later reported three others died. Officials could not be reached for comment.

Some 40 others remained hospitalized in Istanbul, officials said.

The drink was apparently made using methyl alcohol.

At least eight people have been charged with involvement in the production of the drink.

Turkey renames animal species

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey is renaming three indigenous animals to eliminate references to Kurdistan and Armenia, the Environment and Forestry Ministry announced Friday, saying the old names were given by foreigners with designs on the country's unity.

A species of red fox known as "Vulpes Persicus Kurdistanica" will now be known as just "Vulpes Vulpes," a species of wild sheep called "Ovis Armenicus" was changed to "Ovis Orientalis Anatolicus," and a type of deer known as "Capreolus Capreolus Armenicus" was renamed "Capreolus Capreolus Capreolus," a ministry statement said.

From The Associated Press

Ancient ancestor thought to be nearly 4 million years old

BY ANTHONY MITCHELL

The Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — A team of U.S. and Ethiopian scientists has discovered the fossilized remains of what they believe is humankind's first walking ancestor, a hominid that lived in the wooded grasslands of the Horn of Africa nearly 4 million years ago.

The bones were discovered in February at a new site called Mile, in the northeastern Afar region of Ethiopia, said Bruce Latimer, director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in the U.S. state of Ohio. They are estimated to be 3.8-4 million years old.

The fossils include a complete tibia from the lower part of the leg, parts of a thighbone, ribs, vertebrae, a collarbone, pelvis and a complete shoulder blade, or scapula. There is also an anklebone which, with the tibia, proves the creature walked upright, said Latimer, co-leader of the team that discovered the fossils.

The bones are the latest in a growing collection of early human fragments that help explain the evolutionary history of man.

"Right now we can say this is the world's oldest bipedal (an animal walking on two feet) and what makes this significant is be-

cause what makes us human is walking upright," Latimer said.

"This new discovery will give us a picture of how walking upright occurred."

The findings have not been reviewed by outside scientists or published in a scientific journal. Leslie Ailao, an anthropologist and head of the Graduate School at University College in London said, however, that the new finds could be significant.

"It sounds like a significant find, ... particularly if they have a partial skeleton because it allows you to speculate on biomechanics," said Ailao, who was not part of the discovery team.

Paleontologists previously discovered in Ethiopia the remains of *Ardipithecus ramidus*, a transitional creature with significant ape characteristics dating back as many as 4.5 million years. There is some dispute over whether it walked upright on two legs, Latimer and Ailao said.

"This discovery will tell us much about how our 4-million-year-old ancestors walked, how tall they were and what they looked like," said Yohannes Haile-Selassie, an Ethiopian scientist and curator at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as well as a co-leader of the discovery team.

IN THE STATES

Bush takes Social Security plan on the road

BY DEB RIECHMANN

The Associated Press

WESTFIELD, N.J. — President Bush kept pitching his Social Security overhaul Friday, undaunted by Democratic opposition, frayed Republican support and less than enthusiastic backing from the public.

"I'm going to keep telling people we've got a problem until it sinks in, because we've got one," Bush said, underscoring estimates that say Social Security will begin paying out more than it collects in taxes as early as 2018.

Bush's visits to New Jersey and South Bend, Ind., began a two-month blitz in which he and other administration officials are visiting 29 states. The road trip ended a week in which the administration lost momentum on the president's call to revamp the government's 70-year-old retirement system.

The stops Friday were specifically targeted for Reps. Mike Ferguson of New Jersey and Chris Chocola of Indiana, two Republican congressmen who are taking heat on the issue.

Ferguson, who has not taken a position on the private accounts Bush wants, introduced the president, saying only that Bush has launched an "important national conversation." Chocola has said that recent town meetings in his district left him willing to follow Bush's lead, although he talked of the political problems surrounding the issue.

To counter Bush's nationwide swing, Democratic senators planned their own "fix it, don't mix it" forums in four cities over two days.

The Democratic National Committee was responding with radio advertisements in each market targeting Chocola and Fer-



President Bush shares a laugh with Betty Batteredbee, of Edwardsburg, Mich., as he talks about his plan to reform Social Security at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., on Friday.

guson, who have faced tough races in the past. The ads accuse Bush of wanting to "end Social Security's guaranteed benefits" and tie them to the "ups and downs of the stock market."

Bush rebuffed that criticism in his appearance at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend. People in the friendly audience had received tickets through Chocola's office, and the administration chose

those allowed to ask questions — none of them seeking details of his proposal.

People opposed to the plan demonstrated outside of both appearances. In Westfield, police said they arrested nine people, including five juveniles, on disorderly conduct charges. One protester carried a sign that read, "If you want to gamble, Mr. President, go to Atlantic City."

Outside the Joyce Center on the Notre

President's talk cites progress for democracy

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush hailed recent moves toward democracy across the Middle East on Saturday while pressing his demand that Syria withdraw from Lebanon and prodding Palestinians to dismantle terrorist organizations.

"The world is now speaking with one voice to ensure that democracy and freedom are given a chance to flourish in Lebanon," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

He used the address to survey the changing landscape of recent months across a region in which he says "freedom is on the march."

Bush cited successful elections in Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories and Iraq. He also cited peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in Beirut, the Lebanon capital, "and steps toward democratic reform in Egypt and Saudi Arabia."

Dame campus, about 200 people demonstrated across the street with signs that read "You're plan's a joke, we'll be broke" and "Social Security is a phony crisis."

Although he stressed that younger workers need to embrace the private accounts, Bush told the Indiana audience: "If you're relying upon Social Security today, nothing will change. I don't care what the ads say, what the politicians say, you're going to get your check."

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Ill. judge buries slain husband

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Police tightened security Saturday around a church where a federal judge's slain husband was to be memorialized, and the FBI offered a \$50,000 reward for help in finding anyone involved in the gunshot slaying.

U.S. District Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkow and her children have been in protective custody since the judge discovered the bodies of her husband and mother in the basement of her home Monday.

FBI officials said Friday they don't have a suspect and asked the public's help in solving the crime. But FBI Agent Robert D. Grant said one avenue of investigation was white supremacist Matthew Hale and his followers.

Hale, 33, is facing sentencing next month for soliciting an FBI informant to kill Lefkow after she ruled against him in a trademark lawsuit. He has denied any involvement in the slayings, which he called "a heinous crime."

A friend of Hale's, Kathleen Robertson, told The New York



U.S. District Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkow watches pallbearers carry her husband's casket into St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Saturday in Evanston, Ill.

Times and Chicago Tribune in Saturday's editions that authorities seized 100 letters Hale sent her from prison and made copies of her computer hard drive.

Robertatto told The Times the idea that Hale would be involved "defies logic." In the letters, she said, Hale describes singing opera in jail, taking Prozac and being buoyed by the presence of a man with the same name as Adolf Hitler's boyhood friend.

President pardons bootlegger

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush pardoned eight people, including a man convicted of bootlegging 45 years ago, the Justice Department announced Friday.

The first round of clemency orders in Bush's second term brings his total since taking office to 39 pardons and sentence commutations.

Bush's father, President George H.W. Bush, issued 77 pardons during his single term from 1989 to 1993, according to statistics collected by the University of Pittsburgh law school.

President Clinton, by contrast, granted clemency to 456 people during his eight years in office, including 176 on his last day at the

White House. One of those was the contentious pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich, former husband of Democratic Party donor Denise Rich.

Most presidents since the beginning of the 20th century have granted hundreds if not thousands of pardons and sentence commutations, led by Franklin D. Roosevelt's 3,687 over four terms.

Those pardoned by Bush include Charles Russell Cooper, of Corpus Christi, Texas, who was sentenced in May 1959 in South Carolina to three years probation for bootlegging, and Joseph Daniel Gavin, of East Elmhurst, N.Y., court-martialed by the Army in 1984 for failure to obey an order and other charges and given a bad conduct discharge.

Colo. university reviewing professor's comments

BOULDER, Colo. — University of Colorado President Betty Hoffman said a professor who compared Sept. 11 victims to Nazis will not be fired if a review turns up only inflammatory comments, not misconduct.

"If we find it is just about speech, there will be no action," Hoffman told the school's faculty assembly Thursday, adding that she feared a "new McCarthyism" was responsible for the uproar over Ward Churchill's essay.

The university is reviewing Churchill's speeches and lectures to see whether he should be dismissed for exceeding the boundaries of academic freedom. A decision is expected next week.

Hoffman did not comment on published reports this week that the university was considering buying out Churchill's contract.

From The Associated Press

Thundering out of the gate

Talk of reform around the globe is positive start for Rice's term as top diplomat

By GEORGE GEDDA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Israel and the Palestinians are talking peace. Egypt is thinking about holding competitive elections. The Iraq vote was surprisingly smooth. Syria is talking about leaving Lebanon.

Not a bad six weeks for America's new diplomat-in-chief, Condoleezza Rice. Indeed, she may be off to the fastest start of any secretary of state in memory.

Colin Powell, recently seen on holiday in the Caribbean, perhaps wished he could have stayed on a little longer to bask in the spate of good news.

Powell left the State Department for the last time on Jan. 25, missing by five days the Iraqi election and by two weeks the Israeli-Palestinian truce.

He was never able to make much headway on the Middle East during his watch. He took office not long after the second Palestinian intifada began in the region. He was gone just before it seems to have ended. He never had a meaningful opening to work with in the region.

Not surprisingly, Rice seems to

Analysis

be enjoying life in her State Department perch.

"It is a great job at a great time," she told PBS' "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer." "This is a wonderful time for those of us who care about the spread of freedom and liberty, and it's a great time for the Euro-Atlantic alliance."

That may be an overstatement, but the Iraq war syndrome that plagued the alliance does seem to be fading. Somewhat improbably, the United States and France are joining hands in seeking a Lebanon free of Syrian troops.

Kurt Campbell, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, says Rice has benefited from a combination of skill and good fortune.

He also credits her with putting together a strong team, "one of the strongest teams in decades."

Powell's team was highly competent, he says, but there was always the sense that it was under siege and "maybe a little on the outs" with others in the administration.

Peter Brookes, of the Heritage

Foundation, said he doesn't subscribe to the thesis that Powell didn't have much influence.

"The devil's advocate view is also important to the development of policy," he says, predicting that history will be kind to Powell.

"He was an architect of what we are seeing today," he said.

The recent positive trends, Brookes adds, are a vindication of President Bush's policies, of which, he notes, Rice certainly has been a part for some time.

Not so fast with the victory laps, says Michael O'Hanlon, of the Brookings Institution.

He acknowledges that Rice has had a few breaks but asks, "What problems have been solved? It's a little early to take things to the bank."

He believes the Middle East still offers more problems than opportunities for the United States.

Nobody should be gushing, O'Hanlon adds, over the announcement by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that he favors a constitutional change that would permit competitive elections.

"Is Egypt solved because Mubarak has figured out a way to make elections look competitive when they probably won't be?" O'Hanlon asks.



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has witnessed successful Iraqi elections, promises of election reform in Egypt and a reform movement in Lebanon during the first six weeks in her new post.

Montana fire concerns spark Guard request

The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Montana is at such risk for a wildfire "blow-up" this summer that Gov. Brian Schweitzer wants at least some of the state's 1,500 National Guard soldiers in Iraq and elsewhere to return for the wildfire season.

The governor named Friday the state is like a powder keg because of persistent drought, a shortage of mountain snow and forests full of dry timber.

"I know it's going to be a bad fire year," he said, adding he anticipates a repeat of the 1988 season when 4,122 fires charred 2.2 million acres in the Northern Rockies, including about 793,000 acres in Yellowstone National Park.

"Somebody's going to have a blowup," Schweitzer said in an interview. "Is it northern Idaho, is it eastern Washington or is it Montana?"

The governor has asked the Pentagon to return some of the Montana National Guard troops and aircraft called to active duty.

He also plans to ask leaders in Idaho, Washington, Saskatchewan and Alberta to commit manpower and machines to fight the anticipated wildfires.

Montana Guard spokesman Maj. Scott Smith said about 2,000 soldiers, often called on to supplement fire crews each summer, remain in the state.



Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer, seen Friday in his Helena, Mont., office, and other officials are worried this fire season may be as bad as 1988, when Yellowstone National Park burned.

But 10 of the state's 12 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, each capable of carrying a 600-gallon water bucket or 11 firefighters, are not back from Iraq, he said.

The Guard has three larger CH-47 Chinook helicopters able to haul 2,000 gallons of water apiece, but lacks enough flight engineers to operate them all, Smith said. However, a federal mission typically takes precedence over state authority, Smith noted.

U.S. doctors pushing organ swap program

By LINDSEY TANNER

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Kidney transplant specialists pushed Thursday for a national organ swap program that they say could be lifesaving for thousands of ailing patients on transplant waiting lists.

The swap, already done at about 30 U.S. hospitals, would involve patients who need transplants and have relatives or friends willing to donate but whose kidneys aren't a match. Each patient-donor pair would be matched with another pair to allow reciprocal transplants.

"It's quite a gift," said Ron Lazar, of North Canton, Ohio, who received a kidney transplant at the Cleveland Clinic in November after his doctors found a nearby Ohio couple in the same predicament.

Lazar's wife, Kathy, had the wrong blood type but her husband was a match for Debbie Pratt, who like Lazar, had life-threatening kidney disease. And Pratt's husband, Gary, turned out to be a match for Ron Lazar.

"I feel like it was good luck and a prayer that we came up with a match," Lazar, 57, said Thursday.

Creating a national "paired kidney exchange" would allow transplants for about half the 6,000 U.S. patients yearly who have willing donors with incompatible kidneys because of different blood types or other reasons, said Dr. Robert Montgomery, director of Johns Hopkins University's Comprehensive Transplant Center.

"The payoff is huge," said Montgomery, who organized a conference in Chicago where dozens of specialists gathered to develop a blueprint for a national paired organ exchange program.

There are more than 6,000 U.S. patients awaiting kidney transplants; last year, 3,718 on the waiting list died because suitable organs couldn't be found in time, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

The average wait is three to four years, and while there are more living than deceased kidney donors, most transplants involve deceased donor organs because two kidneys can be taken from each cadaver. Paired organ exchanges shorten waiting times and provide kidneys from live donors, which are preferred because they improve patients' chances of survival, Montgomery said.

There are more than 60,000 U.S. patients awaiting kidney transplants; last year, 3,718 on the waiting list died because suitable organs couldn't be found in time, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Calif. judge thwarts Schwarzenegger

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — In a significant blow to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a judge has ruled that he acted illegally when he delayed implementation of a state law requiring hospitals to have at least one nurse for every five patients.

Administration officials promised to appeal Friday's ruling by Superior Court Judge Judy Holzer

Hershner, who issued a preliminary injunction canceling the emergency delay imposed by Schwarzenegger on Nov. 4.

The attorney general's office and California Hospital Association argued that invalidating the governor's action endangers public health as well as hospital finances.

A 1999 law required a new one-to-five nurse-to-patient ratio by Jan. 1.

From The Associated Press

Beached dolphins die off Fla. coast

The Associated Press

MARATHON, Fla. — Nineteen dolphins that became stranded off the Florida Keys have died, including 13 who were euthanized, officials said Friday.

More than 30 others will be moved to rehabilitation facilities Saturday.

The dolphins were euthanized after blood tests showed 13 of them were "not likely to recover at all and that they are suffering," said Laura Engleby, a biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

"Some were still not swimming on their own, and they couldn't hold themselves up," Denise Jackson of the Marine Mammal Rescue Team said.

More than 60 rough-tooth dolphins beached themselves Wednesday on flats and sandbars about a quarter mile off Marathon. Rescue teams moved the

dolphins to a nearby canal where veterinarians have been conducting medical tests.

The remaining 31 live dolphins were being given Pedialyte — a drink normally given to dehydrated human babies — and fresh water, Jackson said.

Teams planned to move them by Saturday morning to rehabilitation facilities along the Keys or on the mainland, officials said.

Marine mammals may become stranded when they are sick, injured or disoriented, Engleby said. Scientists performing necropsies will take genetic samples to determine whether the dolphins all came from the same population.

Rough-tooth dolphins normally inhabit deep waters in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean.

Marathon, in the middle of the Florida Keys, is about 46 miles east of Key West.



Scientists on Thursday release one of the rough-tooth dolphins that became stranded off the Florida Keys. Nineteen of the dolphins have died, including 13 who were euthanized, officials said Friday.

Gene therapy on hold

WASHINGTON — Following a setback in gene therapy experiments in France, U.S. health advisers are recommending the treatment be given only to children who have no other alternatives.

The Food and Drug Administration convened its advisory panel after a 3-year-old French boy became the third child to develop cancer following gene therapy for treatment of X-linked severe combined immunodeficiency, or X-SCID. The FDA had asked U.S. researchers doing similar work to put it on hold.

Doctors and scientists on the advisory panel said they didn't want to hold up the therapy for children who have already failed to respond to bone marrow transplants, an alternative treatment. But they noted that the number of such children — who under Friday's recommendation would still be able to have experimental gene therapy — is very small.

Ten children suffering with X-SCID were basically cured in the French study, at first greeted with great excitement as a breakthrough in gene therapy, said Dr. Warren Leonard, a panel member from the National Institutes of Health. But three later developed leukemia, and one of them died.

From The Associated Press

CAREER CENTER



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Budget office warns Congress of higher Medicare drug costs

BY ALAN FRAM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress' nonpartisan budget analyst added new fuel to the Medicare debate late Friday with new, higher cost estimates for a prescription drug program that has already drawn fire for its soaring price tag.

In a letter to lawmakers, the Congressional Budget Office said its estimate for the drug benefits for the 10-year period ending in 2015 had grown by \$54 billion since January. No cumulative 10-year total was provided, but a separate CBO letter used figures that indicated a total over that period of \$849 billion.

Significantly, though, that number omitted savings expected to accompany the new program. As a result, the new congressional estimate was not directly comparable to the \$724 billion projection the Bush administration released last month, which factored in those savings.

If those savings were subtracted, the \$849 billion figure would likely be lower than Bush's \$724 billion estimate, according to figures cited by the CBO.

Even so, the new numbers could further rattle the politics surrounding the drug benefits, which don't even take effect until 2006. They were released days before Congress' Republican-run fiscal committees start writing budget plans that will include domestic spending cuts and call for savings from Medicaid and other benefit programs — but probably not Medicare.

"The price tag for the Republican Medicare prescription drug bill just gets higher and higher," said Thomas Kahn, Democratic staff director of the House Budget Committee. "The underlying benefits for seniors never improve."

"The drug benefit is a necessary improvement to Medicare," said White House budget office spokesman Noam Nussner. "We are working to see the new law implemented fully, along with benefits such as greater individual choice" and other efforts to control costs.

Messages left for spokespeople for several congressional Republicans were not immediately returned.

Ever since they were enacted in 2003 for a presumable \$400 billion 10-year price tag, the cost has crept steadily upward.

Lawmakers of both parties have accused the White House of withholding information about the program's true costs to win conservatives' votes that were crucial to congressional passage, a charge the administration denied.

Two months after passage, the Bush administration raised the 10-year cost estimate to \$534 billion.

Since then, the projected cost has grown mostly because the original 10 years being measured included two years when the program was barely in effect. The current 10-year period begins in 2006 and covers a full decade of benefits.

Macabre trophies

BTK and other serial killers keep tokens of crimes

BY MATT SEDENSKY

The Associated Press

WICHITA, Kansas — The Baton Rouge serial killer made off with a silver toe ring, Jeffrey Dahmer kept rotting body parts. And the serial killer known as BTK held on to jewelry, driver's licenses and photographs.

The things that serial killers take as their crimes scenes are not meaningless mementos. Those who study the cases say such trophies are important in understanding how BTK may have gone years without satisfying his hunger to murder.

BTK suspect Dennis L. Rader, 59, a churchgoing Boy Scout leader who is married with two children, is charged with 10 slayings between 1974 and 1979.

Rader

Many contend the serial killer, who gave himself the nickname BTK, short for "Bind, Torture, Kill" — is responsible for even more murders.

The timeline of the BTK killings has gaps as long as eight years and a 14-year reprieve between the last linked death and Rader's arrest.

But experts agree that regardless of the time between a serial killer's murders, his fantasies can be satisfied with a glimpse of his trophies.

"They can't get to recreate that thrill of dominating and killing somebody," said Marilyn Bardsley, a serial killer expert.

Police haven't said if they've confiscated anything from Rader's house that may have belonged to a BTK victim. Over the years, though, BTK's mailings to authorities and the media have included tokens from his victims' homes.

When Nancy Fox, a 1977 victim, the killer killed a driver's license. At other crime scenes, he filched jewelry, some of which he later sent to a local television station. When Vicki Wegerle was killed in 1986, BTK snapped pictures of her body in various positions.

"The way he was taunting police, he was reliving the killing from a long time ago," said Steven Egger, a criminologist at the University of Houston-Clear Lake who wrote a book on serial murderers, "The Killers Among Us."

Still, Bardsley said the enjoyment trophies can bring is no replacement for actually killing again.

"That thrill wears off," she said.

Case tests Texas law protecting unborn

Teens' respective roles in ending pregnancy incites criticism of legislation

BY LISA FALKENBERG

The Associated Press

LUFKIN, Texas — The would-be teen mother arrived by ambulance last May, her belly bruised, the twin fetuses she carried for five months gone and her lips tightly sealed.

Authorities assumed 16-year-old Erica Basoria had been beaten, and charged her boyfriend, 18-year-old Gerardo "Jerry" Flores, with murder under a new Texas state law protecting the unborn.

But Basoria told authorities she had been trying to kill the fetuses for weeks — and finally asked Flores to help by stepping on her stomach.

Now Flores faces murder charges — but Basoria can't be charged because the new law, like many others across the United States, bans prosecution of mothers on the grounds that they have a legal right to end pregnancies.

The case has attorneys on both sides questioning the fairness of the law.

"How can two people conspire to do something like this and only one of them be punished? How can that be fair?" defense attorney Ryan Deaton asked.

Prosecutor Clyde Herrington said it was startling that "they completely leave the female out of the criminal penalty."

"It doesn't seem entirely fair," Herrington said.

The couple had been dating just over a year when Basoria became pregnant in January 2004. Flores, a senior in his last year of high school who was pursuing a soccer scholarship, said he offered to delay college a year until Basoria graduated.

The pregnancy changed everything. Both were scared. Neither had a job. And there were two babies.

Basoria didn't return calls for comment, but wrote in an affidavit that her family encouraged an abortion: "They said I was too young to have children."

Flores' mother, Norma, shared the idea, saying: "It's a life that wants to live."



Gerardo "Jerry" Flores is detained in the Angelina County Jail, in Lufkin, Texas. He is charged with murder under a new law protecting the unborn.

At four months, when the mirror betrayed her first bulge, Basoria wanted out. She feigned taking prenatal vitamins and jogged when she wasn't supposed to.

"About two weeks before the miscarriage, I started hitting my-

self," Basoria wrote in an affidavit. "I would do this every other day and I would use both of my fists when I did this. I would hit myself 10 or more times."

Then she turned to her boyfriend.

"I said I didn't want to do it," Flores recalled. But she kept pleading, he said, until he agreed to step on her.

The night of the miscarriage, the couple fought. Later, he awoke to Basoria's screams and found her crying and bleeding on the toilet. Flores' mother and sister went to the hospital and Flores stayed behind.

Flores since has been charged with capital murder, though prosecutors aren't seeking the death penalty. He remains in jail, awaiting a trial date.

A co-author of the state law said it was intended to protect women and unborn babies from domestic violence, drunken drivers and other assaults.

"I feel sad for these immature, stupid people. But the law is what the law is," said Congressman Ray Allen, a Republican.

Activists seek justice in 58-year-old Ga. lynching

BY ELLIOTT C. MCGLAULIN

The Associated Press

MONROE, Ga. — Where the old Moore's Ford bridge once stood, there are no reminders of the atrocities exacted here 58 years ago other than a crude, black "KKK" spray-painted on the underside of a modern bridge nearby.

It was at this point along the Apalachicola River that a mob of white men pulled four black sharecroppers from a car, dragged them down a wagon trail and repeatedly shot them with pistols and shotguns.

Nearly six decades later, the lynchings remain unsolved and most of the SS suspects named in the FBI's investigation are dead, but that isn't deterring the efforts of the dozens of politicians, activists and victims' relatives that make up the Moore's Ford Memorial Committee.

"They want justice — regardless of how much time has passed. Bolstered by the recent wave of reopened civil rights murder cases across the South, the small activist group is asking a local prosecutor to use the FBI report to seek indictments against the surviving suspects."

The group also is organizing local events next month to call attention to the unsolved lynchings of the freed Dorothy Malcom and George and Mae Murray Dorsey. The events will include a forum at the Walton County

Courthouse and a 2½-mile march to the new bridge.

District Attorney Ken Wynne says he won't reopen the case until new evidence is found.

"They've successfully prosecuted old, old homicide cases when new evidence develops," Wynne said, but he pointed out that four years ago the Georgia Bureau of Investigation "conducted a fresh investigation and wasn't able to unearth any evidence to bring charges."

In 2001, then-Gov. Roy Barnes ordered the case reopened. The FBI says it considers the case open, but unsolved.

State Rep. Tyrone Brooks, a longtime civil-rights leader from Atlanta, said the case is "enough evidence to seek indictments in the case."

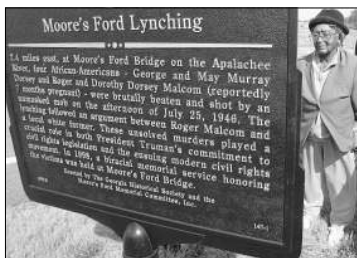
"We don't need any more investigations. The evidence is there."

Tyrone Brooks
Georgia legislator

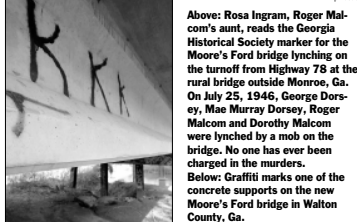
"We don't need any more investigations. The evidence is there."

In the FBI's 500-page synopsis of its case file (the agency says the full 3,500-page file will not be available until next year), it states that some people were indicted as suspects simply for being relatives, friends or neighbors of a white man stabbed days before the lynchings by one of the victims. Others were listed as suspects because they "did not explain their whereabouts on the day of the lynching."

At least two of the suspects



AP photos



Above: Rosa Ingram, Roger Malcom's aunt, reads the Georgia Historical Society marker for the Moore's Ford bridge lynching on the turnoff from Highway 78 at the rural bridge outside Monroe, Ga. On July 25, 1946, George Dorsey, Mae Murray Dorsey, Roger Malcom and Dorothy Malcom were lynched by a mob on the bridge. No one has ever been charged in the murders.

Below: Graffiti left by one of the concrete supports on the new Moore's Ford bridge in Walton County, Ga.

named in the FBI report are still alive. Repeated telephone messages left by The Associated Press at the suspected homes of those two men went unanswered.

Not everyone is eager to see the Moore's Ford lynching case again gain notoriety. An elderly woman recently stopped along Highway 78 said she was one of the suspects. "Leave those poor people alone. They're all dead." The woman declined to give her name.

In Walton County — about 35 miles east of Atlanta and where three roads near the lynching site bear the surnames of many of the FBI suspects — few leads have developed over the years.

Members of the memorial committee say Walton County residents seem scared or unwilling to come forward with information. Only two residents have helped police with information on who may have been in the mob. The suspects they named are dead.

Experts not surprised by primate attack

BY KIM CURTIS AND
TERENCE CHIA

The Associated Press

HAVILAH, Calif. — Chimpanzees come across to the public as little darlings, often in diapers and always willing to hold hands.

But they're really aggressors, primate experts say, more than capable of carrying out attacks as violent as one that left a man fighting for his life.

Generally weighing between 120 and 150 pounds with strength much greater than man, chimps in the wild are known to kill chimps from neighboring groups, hunt other primates and even attack humans.

"Male chimps are intensely territorial. They defend their territory against any perceived threat," said Craig Stanford, a professor at the University of Southern California who studies primate behavior.

On Friday, authorities continued to investigate how two chimps at an animal sanctuary escaped from their cage and mauled St. James Davis, 62.

They were shot to death during Thursday's attack by the son-in-law of the sanctuary's owners, Virginia and Ralph Brauer. Animal Haven Ranch, about 30 miles east of Bakersfield, has held state permits to shelter exotic animals since 1985. It is allowed to house up to nine primates at one time and is home to one spider monkey and six chimpanzees.



St. James, top, and LaDonna Davis, of West Covina, Calif., visit their chimpanzee Moe at Animal Haven Ranch in Caliente, Calif., in October 2004. Moe was taken from the Davis' Los Angeles home in 1999 after biting off part of a woman's finger. On Thursday, St. James Davis was attacked by two other chimps at Animal Haven Ranch while visiting Moe.

"A big part of the investigation will be figuring out whether the owners were in compliance with regulations," Sheriff's Cmdr. Hal Cheelander said.

State wildlife and county health authorities were testing the chimps for rabies and other diseases that could affect the victims' health, Cheelander said.

Davis, 62, and his wife, LaDonna Davis, 64, were visiting the sanctuary to celebrate the birthday of a 39-year-old chimpanzee,

Moe, who was taken from their home in 1999 after biting off part of a woman's finger.

The couple had brought Moe a cake and were standing outside his cage when the two young male chimps, Ollie and Buddy, attacked the man.

Two other chimps, females named Susie and Bones, also escaped from the cage. They were recovered outside the sanctuary five hours later.

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Susie and Bones could have played a role in the attack, primate experts said. "We know that one of the most reliable predictors of increased male aggression is the presence of sexually receptive females," said Jeffrey French, a psychologist who studies primate behavior at the University of Nebraska, Omaha.

The chimps chewed off most of Davis' face, tore off his foot and all of his fingers, and attacked his other limbs and genitals. Davis was transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center, where he had surgery late Thursday night.

The medical center would not release any information about Davis' condition on Friday. Hospital spokeswoman Julie Smith said the family requested confidentiality.

LaDonna Davis was bitten on the hand. She was released from the hospital Friday. The Brauers would not speak to reporters, but a family friend gave a statement, which read, "All of us here at Animal Haven Ranch are praying for the recovery of St. James Davis and LaDonna Davis."

"This is the only incident in 20 years of operation," the statement said.

Kim Curtis reported from Havilah, and Terence Chia reported from San Francisco.

Arnold will always be Mr. Olympia to buff fans

BY ERICA WERNER

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The world knows Arnold Schwarzenegger as a movie star. Californians know him as their governor. But he'll forever be Mr. Olympia to bodybuilders competing in the annual Arnold Classic.

"It's like when an all-time winning coach retires, you still call him coach," said Andy Giarondo, a massive bodybuilder who spent Friday posing inside a cage in Columbus' convention center. As the Arnold Fitness Weekend got under way, crowds packed a cavernous exhibit hall where booths hawked products from whey power drinks to hair plugs to saunas. Giant men walked arm in arm with women who looked like they could crush the average man's skull.

Indifferent to the snow flurries outside, they wore short-shorts, bikini tops and muscle-T's.

On a stage at the end of the hall, older women in bikinis flexed to pounding music.

Schwarzenegger, the muse of this singular subculture, arrived at the women's final Friday night with his wife, Maria Shriver, and their four children.



California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, right, congratulates Ms. Figure International Jenny Lynn on Friday at the Arnold Classic in Ohio.

He handed out trophies in three women's divisions, including best figure competition, which went to a fellow Californian, Jenny Lynn. The Alamo, Calif., woman, who has won the event three years in a row, noted that she voted for Schwarzenegger, calling it a "surreal experience" to receive her trophy and \$10,000 check from him.

Schwarzenegger presented the top female bodybuilding award to Yaxeni Oriquen of Venezuela, telling the muscular woman she would have given him some competition during his bodybuilding days.

Among bodybuilders, weightlifters and other devotees of the

muscular form, the acclaim for Schwarzenegger appears universal. "He's an icon," said Irving Gelb, a photographer for Musclemag International who said bodybuilders "revere Schwarzenegger."

"It's like he's a bescon, giving them hope and strength. He's the father of the sport."

"I don't think anybody should be messing with the eyeball," Democratic Rep. Kevin Joyce said Friday. The procedure involves making a tiny slice in the membrane covering the eye and slipping in a small, flat piece of metal. The result is a shiny shape in the white of the eye. The procedure is performed under local anesthesia.

Dr. Janak Koirala, assistant professor of medicine at South-

Lawmakers push against new eyeball jewelry trend

BY MARY TALLON

The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Some Illinois lawmakers want to make sure the twinkle in your eye doesn't come from jewelry.

Repulsed by a body modification offered at a Dutch institute — where tiny metal hearts and half-moons are surgically embedded in the whites of the eye — one lawmaker has proposed banning the practice in Illinois.

A House committee Thursday approved legislation that would make it a felony to implant jewelry in someone's eye.

"I don't think anybody should be messing with the eyeball," Democratic Rep. Kevin Joyce said Friday.

The procedure involves making a tiny slice in the membrane covering the eye and slipping in a small, flat piece of metal. The result is a shiny shape in the white of the eye. The procedure is performed under local anesthesia.

Dr. Janak Koirala, assistant professor of medicine at South-

ern Illinois University, said he is concerned about the possibility of infection or other damage — risks that would last as long as the person kept the jewelry in their eye.

"It's not like piercing the skin," he said.

In the United States, at least one California-based doctor is offering the procedure, but a tattoo artist said lawmakers are giving the issue more attention than it deserves.

"Most people in the Midwest, when it comes to body modification, are very conservative," said Kevin Veara, the 43-year-old owner of Black Moon Tattoos.

He conceded, that as tattoos become more mainstream, people in Europe and the U.S. coats are undergoing more daring and possibly dangerous body modifications — larger and deeper piercings through various body parts.

"It's like you're not a freak anymore if you have a tattoo," Veara said. "To be a freak, you've got to step up a little bit."

“It's like you're
not a freak
anymore if
you have a
tattoo. To be a
freak, you've
got to step up
a little bit.”

Concealed guns

TX AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry signed a concealed handgun reciprocity agreement with South Carolina.

The deal allows those with concealed handgun licenses from Texas and South Carolina to legally carry concealed handguns in either state. Texas now has reciprocity agreements with 17 states.

Pricey pipeline

NV LAS VEGAS — The Southern Nevada Water Authority said a pipeline to bring water to Las Vegas from rural Nevada could cost more than \$2 billion. Officials said the price would include 461 miles of pipeline, four pumping stations and about 200 miles of power lines. The project would reduce dependence of southern Nevada's growing population on the Colorado River.

Snow wipes out tests

MD BALTIMORE — At least 18 of Maryland's 24 school districts postponed the state's annual standardized tests because snow days have cut into preparation time. The tests were scheduled to begin this week. Many districts say students need to be back at school for at least a day before testing can begin. Also, some new teachers haven't been trained in test administration.

Pet scammer

GA ATLANTA — Police arrested a man they say took advantage of people searching for missing pets. Police say Andre Gould counted as many as 17 people in six states to give him \$85 for a pet carrier to fly their dogs back to them. Gould received \$3,000 since December, but the owners never got their pets, police said.

Same place, new name

MO JEFFERSON CITY — After nearly two decades of struggle, Southwest Missouri State University will get a new name. The House voted overwhelmingly to drop Southwest from its name. The 120-35 vote sends the bill to Gov. Matt Blunt, who supports the change to Missouri State University. It would take effect Aug. 28.

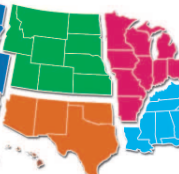
Rundown runway

CA SANTA PAULA — State inspectors won't allow Santa Paula Airport to reopen until the runway is lengthened. Erosion by the Santa Clara River's rolling storm runoff shortened the 2,650-foot runway to 1,200 feet. The shorter length failed to meet safety requirements set by the California Department of Transportation. The airport is losing \$16,000 a day in revenue.

Ferry bill gains steam

HI HONOLULU — Lawmakers have cleared the way for plans to link the main Hawaiian Islands by ferry, transportation cheaper than flying but feared by some residents for its possible risks to the environment.

After hearing three hours of testi-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

mony on both sides of the issue Wednesday, the Senate Transportation Committee voted to hold a bill that would have required a detailed environmental review for the proposal.

"That goes a long way in sending a message that the state really wants this," said John Garibaldi, chief executive of Hawaii Superferry Inc. "They're not going to put up roadblocks."

Hawaii Superferry and some state officials had said requiring an environmental review could have scuttled the first serious attempt in years to set up an interisland ferry system. Garibaldi said the requirement would have jeopardized \$200 million in funding.

Environmentalists are worried about traffic, transportation of alien pest species and endangering humpback whales.

Trailer wreck kills 2

LA SHREVEPORT — Two people were killed when three tractor-trailers collided on Interstate 20, police said.

One of the rigs was traveling eastbound when it crossed the median around 7:30 p.m. and hit another tractor-trailer in the westbound lane. A third tractor-trailer then collided with the other two.

Authorities have not identified the two bodies that have been pulled from the wreckage, Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator said.

One rig was charred, Prator said. It is blocking both westbound lanes of the interstate about three-fourths of a mile east of the Texas state line. The accident also



Now that's a yawn

Waiting for his owner, Sandy Hodes, Cheyenne the Great Dane catches some rays through the sunroof the family SUV in a shopping mall parking lot in Bainbridge, Ohio.

spilled cartons of orange juice and frozen turkeys onto the highway. Authorities expect westbound traffic to remain blocked at Exit 3 well into the night, the sheriff said.

Rabbit at risk?

ID BOISE — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to decide by May 16 whether threats to the North American pygmy rabbit warrant a yearlong review that could lead to protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The agreement came in a settlement of a U.S. District Court lawsuit by environmental groups that contended the FWS had refused to consider their petition for protection of the rabbit.

The settlement was approved Thursday by Judge B. Lynn Winmill in Boise.

A similar review was given to the greater sage grouse, which shares the rabbits' habitat. It was completed Jan. 7, when Fish and Wildlife officials opted against protection for that species.

No parole for killer

CA RIVERSIDE — A California man convicted of killing an off-duty police officer nearly 19 years ago, in one of the nation's first "road rage" fatalities, will not be released on parole.

Patricia Dwyer was killed on Aug. 22, 1986, after being shot through the chest by an irate motorist. Harold Harvey Hawks, 45, was convicted of second-degree murder and is serving a sentence of 15 years to life in prison.

Hawks' fifth request for release was denied this week by a two-member panel of the state Board of Prison Terms, which determined that Hawks' "total disregard for human suffering and the callous nature of the crime warranted more time in custody."

Name that monkey

NY NEW YORK — The right to name a new species of monkey sold Thursday for \$650,000 in an online auction, with the funds going to protect the Bolivian habitat where the species lives. The Web site that handled the sale said.

The winning bidder, who outbid Ellen DeGeneres, chose to remain anonymous for now, said Kelly Fiore, director of business development for the New York-based auction venue, Charity Folks.

There was no immediate information on what the winner planned to name the species, but an announcement might be made later, Fiore said.

Subway commercials

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Advertisements have invaded movie theaters, airplane video screens and ATMs, and now they're coming to the tunnels of San Francisco's subway system, where dark walls will be replaced by 20-second animated commercials.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit Board of Directors approved a plan for the tunnel ads, which affix hundreds of posters in sequence to give passengers the illusion of a movie between stations.



Going with the floe

John Parsons of Niwot, Colo., makes his way down an ice floe at the Ouray Ice Park in Ouray, Colo.



A sinking feeling

continues to grow.

A two-story home in Lake City, Fla., sits on the edge of a sinkhole that



Unexpected home Patrick Doss, of Fredericksburg, Va., examines a stuffed bear in Gander Mountain outdoors store in Spotsylvania County, Va. Mike Ritter, of Alexandria, Va., killed the 9-foot, 1,000-pound Kodiak brown bear during a hunting trip to Alaska. He paid \$9,500 to have it stuffed and sent to his Virginia home, only to find it was too big to fit through the door.



Oh, what a feeling! Sergeant Tommi DeRudder screams to the crowd as she cruises down Main Street in Kalispell, Mont., during a homecoming parade for members of the 639th Quartermaster Company. The soldiers returned home from more than a year's duty in Iraq.



Battling a blaze Berwick firefighters Tim Doltrich, left, and Bruce Angel battle flames breaking through the roof of an off-campus student house near Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pa.



Frosty blooms Phillip Pickard walks under blooming redbuds smothered by snow in Roanoke, Va. Recent warm weather caused the trees to bloom, but a recent snow put spring on hold.

Alleged hazing death

CA SACRAMENTO — Four members of an unchartered fraternity were charged with involuntary manslaughter after a pledge died from drinking too much water during hazing.

Four other members of the Chi Tau fraternity at the University of California, Chico, were charged Thursday with hazing, a misdemeanor. The four people charged with manslaughter could face up to four years in prison.

Matthew Carrington, 21, died of water intoxication Feb. 2 after being forced to drink water throughout the night in the basement of the off-campus fraternity house.

Police officers arrested

NY NEW YORK — Five veteran police officers have been arrested on charges they accepted counterfeit Coach bags and other merchandise from a street peddler as bribes, a prosecutor said Thursday.

The officers, all assigned to Manhattan's 13th Precinct, were charged with third-degree bribe receiving, receiving a reward for official misconduct, and official misconduct, said Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau.

If convicted of the most serious charge of bribe receiving, the officers could be sentenced to up to seven years in prison.

The street peddler, Jamil Faied, 44, was charged with third-degree bribery, which also carries a prison sentence of up to seven years.

Chicken feet crackdown

OH CLEVELAND — Health officials have seized boneless chicken feet at several Ohio stores, part of an expanding effort to prevent an outbreak of the bird flu.

Officials planned to visit about 200 Asian restaurants and markets around Cuyahoga County on Friday, explaining the health risks involved with a product that the U.S. Department of Agriculture says was illegally smuggled into the country.

The U.S. government banned imports of birds and poultry products from Asia last year.

Some chicken feet, an Asian delicacy, are seized at a Cleveland grocery store on Wednesday. Authorities also found them at three stores in Columbus and one in Whitehall, said Paul Panico, head of food safety for the agriculture department.

Vegas mayor loves gin

NV LAS VEGAS — Sin City's mayor made no apologies Thursday after being criticized for extolling gin to a class of fourth-graders.

Mayor Oscar Goodman said he was just being himself when he told elementary school students that drinking was one of his hobbies and that the one thing he would want if stranded on an island is a bottle of gin.

"I answered the question honestly and truthfully," Goodman told reporters. "I'm not going to lie to children. I'm not going to say I would take a teddy bear or a Bible or something like that."

Asked by a reporter if he had a drinking problem, Goodman answered, "Oh, absolutely not. I love

to drink."

Moments later, he cut off questions and walked out of the news conference.

Cell phone ban

HI HONOLULU — Motorists who chat carelessly on their cellular phones while stuck in Hawaii's traffic may soon need to think of investing in a headset.

Anyone caught driving while using a hand-held cell phone would be subject to a \$200 fine under a bill that passed out of the House on Thursday.

The measure includes an exemption for those making calls because of an emergency.

Some lawmakers questioned the need for the bill.

It's already illegal to drive inattentively in Hawaii, said Rep. Galen Fox, R-Waikiki-Ala Moana, speaking in opposition of the bill on the floor of the House.

Big lobster a mere shell

PA PITTSBURGH — A gigantic lobster that may have survived two world wars under Prohibition before being plucked from the ocean will live on — but only as the shell of its former self.

The Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium plans to keep the shell of the 22-pound lobster, named Bubba, and use its remains to educate school children, said Rachel Capp, a zoo spokeswoman.

Some of Bubba's meat will be sent to labs for testing as officials try to determine why Bubba died, Capp said Thursday.

Postcard 68 years late

OR ROSEBURG — Roseburg-area businessman Edward Hammond never heard back on whether a Roseburg store was willing to handle the sale of his stamp collections.

That's because his postcard, mailed Oct. 13, 1937, didn't arrive until Monday.

Postal carrier Kelly Pace was sorting mail when he spotted the brown card with its printed one-cent stamp. It was addressed simply to "Roseburg Book Store, Roseburg, Oregon." That store opened in 1910 in a building now occupied by Roseburg Book & Stationery.

Pace delivered it with the rest of the day's mail.

Duane Dodge, a supervisor at the Roseburg Post Office, said the card is in good shape and speculated that it may have spent the last 68 years somewhere undisturbed.

Benadryl-related death

SC ABBEVILLE — The death of a 4-month-old child given Benadryl at a child-care center has drawn renewed attention to the over-the-counter allergy medication's unauthorized use as a way of quieting children.

Sherry Bayne, 44, owner of Sherry's Home Daycare was charged with involuntary manslaughter and neglect in the death of Caleb O'Daniel, who was given Benadryl without parental permission.

Since 2000, there have been nearly a dozen media reports nationally of Benadryl being used for sedation of children at day-care centers, with at least four ending in death.

Photos and stories from wire services

Gag order no joke to Leno

Brad Garrett of 'Raymond' delivers host's Jackson jokes

BY LAURA WIDES
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Jay Leno says he can still write the Michael Jackson jokes, he just can't tell them.

So while the "Tonight Show" host waits to hear whether he is exempt from a gag order barring potential witnesses from discussing Jackson's child molestation trial, Leno called on actor Brad Garrett to act as his Jackson joke-telling surrogate.

"As I'm sure you know, I was called as a witness in the Michael Jackson trial," Leno told his audience Friday night. "I'm going to tell the jury the same thing I'm telling you right now. I only rode that llama once. I didn't know it was underage."

"I'm not allowed to tell any Michael Jackson jokes. I can still write them," Leno added before handing the reins to Garrett. The co-star of "Everybody Loves Raymond" then reeled off several one-liners, including this one: "They said this trial will probably last six months, although Michael Jackson asked for some time off to entertain the troops."

"OK, they're Cub Scout troops, but they're still troops."

Leno, who has been subpoenaed to testify at Jackson's trial, is seeking an exemption to Superior Court Judge Rodney S. Melville's gag order, citing his right to free speech.

Jackson, 46, has pleaded not guilty to charges of molesting a boy; conspiracy and adminis-

ing an intoxicating agent, alcohol, to his alleged victim.

A legal motion filed on Leno's behalf argues Melville couldn't have intended for the order, issued more than a year ago, to limit "public personalities" from commenting on the case.

Applying the order to Leno would be prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment and the California Constitution, the motion argues, and it asks the judge to clarify or lift it.

On Thursday, one of Jackson's attorneys, Robert Sanger, filed a response, arguing Leno should not be exempted from the order.

"While the need for a protective order is unfortunate and does come at some cost, it is necessary to protect Mr. Jackson's right to a



Jay Leno

fair trial," Sanger wrote.

Then the lawyer tossed in his own zinger.

"One is reminded of the depression that overtook the comedy community when Richard Nixon stepped down from the presidency," he said in a footnote to his motion.

Jackson's jewelry causes stir in Austria

The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Austrians recognized Michael Jackson's star — the one he wore on his chest, that is.

The pop singer has been photographed before recent court appearances in California wearing what experts here say is the "Order of Vienna," a medal awarded to artists, businessmen or others of merit, Austria Press Agency reported.

The gold star with an eagle in the center has been bestowed to about 50 people a year for their contributions to society.

The only problem is that the 46-year-old Jackson has not been among the prize's recipients.

The singer's staff bought the medal at an antique shop in downtown Vienna, APA reported.

It is illegal in Austria to wear such medals if one has not earned them, and Jackson theoretically could face a fine in Austria.

City officials say they don't plan to press charges.

Family of accuser praises star on video

The Associated Press

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — The family of Michael Jackson's accuser heaped praise on the singer and called him a father figure in a video shown to the jury in the pop star's child molestation trial Friday.

"[My son] was the one who

asked him, 'Can I call you daddy?' and he said 'Of course,'" the accuser's mother said in the video.

Throughout, the family used the words "nice," "humble," "funny" and "fatherly" to describe Jackson.

The video was recorded Feb.

19-20, 2003, two weeks after the airing of a TV documentary that damaged Jackson's image.

It was presented as the 18-year-old sister of the accuser testified for a second day. Prosecutors allege Jackson's associates coerced the family to film the video by holding them captive.

The boy, 13 at the time, recalled in the video his first visit to Neverland and how he asked Jackson if he could sleep in his room. Jackson said it was OK if his parents gave permission, which they did, the boy said.

Prosecutors allege that the boy was molested sometime after the video was made.

Sonny Savio, center, a member of the National School Board Association's Board of Directors from St. Charles Parish, bows his head in prayer Thursday before the opening session of the Louisiana School Board Association Convention in Alexandria, La.



Bus drivers back at work a day after fatal shooting

BY GARY TANNER
The Associated Press

DOVER, Tenn. — With black bows attached to the front of every school bus, all Sevier County drivers ran their usual routes Thursday morning, one day after a beloved co-worker was shot and killed while picking up students.

The drivers completed their routes without incident, said transportation director Francis Carson, but some were worried about getting back behind the wheel.

"I have small children, and they have been asking questions: 'Do you have to do this?' substitute bus driver Michele Ehterson said.

The black bows had the number "22" on them, a reminder of the bus Joyce Gregory drove for two years. Police say a 14-year-old high school freshman fatally shot Gregory with a .45-caliber handgun, apparently one day after he was reported for using smokeless tobacco on the bus.

Veteran bus driver Brenda Byrd said while some drivers may have felt some hesitation about returning to work, such feelings were quickly put behind them.

"It makes all of us so sick because you think it will happen anywhere else but here," she said. "It never crossed my

mind that one of my students would be hurt. It probably never crossed Joyce's mind, either."

The shooting happened just outside Cumberland City, about 50 miles northwest of Nashville. The 47-year-old married mother of two daughters was picking up students and taking them to Dover Elementary and Stewart County High School.

The 14-year-old has been identified as Jason Clinard. Police released no new details Thursday about the shooting and would not comment on a motive or where he got the weapon. He is charged with first-degree murder in juvenile court and he is being held without bond. He could face adult charges later.

Many students were absent Thursday. Phillip Wallace, director of the school system, said he waived attendance requirements, understanding that children and parents were still in shock and grieving.

School transportation supervisor Eric Watkins said the bus drivers are like an extended family. Two drivers volunteered Wednesday to complete Gregory's afternoon route, "something that would be very difficult, to say the least," Watkins said.

"As a whole, they draw off the energy of each other," Watkins said.



THE LEAF CHRONICLE, FILE/AP

Jason Clinard, 14, is accused of shooting and killing Stewart County bus driver Joyce Gregory.

La. politicians jump to oppose federal court's prayer ruling

BY DOUG SIMPSON
The Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. — A federal court ruling that bans prayer at school board meetings provoked a flurry of political protest in Louisiana this week, with elected officials of both parties jumping to support the long tradition of starting board meetings with invocations to God.

The ruling, issued by a federal judge, blocked a school board north of New Orleans from beginning meetings with a prayer. The judge found the prayers — some referring to God's "daring son, our savior Jesus Christ" — breached the line between church and state.

Louisiana politicians criticized the judge. The governor, a congressman and other officials blasted the ruling and pledged support for an anticipated appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal. Gov. Kathleen Blanco,

a Democrat, said she'd file a "friend of the court" brief opposing the ruling, and Republican Congressman Bobby Jindal said he'd introduce a resolution in Congress next week, also supporting the prayer tradition.

"I just have to say that these prayers, where public officials ask for the Lord's guidance, are entirely appropriate," Blanco said in a speech to the Louisiana School Boards Association on Friday.

The lawsuit was filed in the Tangipahoa Parish, which led to the ruling by U.S. District Judge Ginger Berrigan.

The lawsuit was filed anonymously by a parent with backing by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Louisiana School Boards Association held its annual convention this week, in this central Louisiana city, about 220 miles northwest of New Orleans. Organizers made a point of kicking it off with a prayer asking for guidance from God.

Sunday Horoscope

It's slow going most of the day, as the moon void of course urges us to relax and let down our emotional guard. The moon moves into Aquarius later in the day, and it feels right to lightly connect with friends—things hardly get deeper than "How's the weather?" but genuine warmth emanates from even the most surface-level conversations.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(March 6). You explore the landscape of your own psyche this year and discover talents you don't even know you had. Invest in yourself, and don't be stingy. There are many spring romantic offers, but you're not sure whom you trust. Keep things low key. Insist on getting paid better, and you'll find greater security in May. Love signs are Cancer and Scorpio.

ARIES (March 21-March 19). You help yourself most when you play straight. It's the perfect time to straighten out misunderstandings (probably over money) with a partner. The much-needed dose of reality you provide is appreciated.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

The more honest you are, the better life feels. Don't waste time trying to change what has already been decided—go to the next thing! All forward movement is good, though it won't seem that way at first.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you give yourself the same advice you dish out, you're extra lucky! Being graceful in the face of change is more important than perfection. Romantic conversations go well, especially if your love is a Scorpio or Pisces.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Do what's necessary to create more love in your life. This might include working less, playing more and making yourself available to interested people. A dream clues you to where the end of the rainbow lies.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Some of your friends want to make it OK for you to be less than all you could

be. It's time to add new names and numbers to your database. This takes moxie, but those with moxie usually get what they want.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You want to draw the line, but ultimatums in love won't work. Keep the lines of communication open. It could be time to learn the fine art of allowing others to think that your plan was their idea.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Your efforts to be interesting pay off. Fun and unusual topics of conversation make you irresistible to the very people you consider so sophisticated and special. A health breakthrough is featured, too.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Exercise good judgment. Since your natural enthusiasm endears you to all you come in contact with, be accepted into a variety of situations—some of which you should have nothing to do with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)

Things could still go either way. This is where your faith will be tested. Keep up the positive intentions, and move forward, even when you're in convincingly skeptical company.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23-Jan. 19)

Profound happenings can take place. Separate yourself from your body, your actions and your beliefs. There's a soul inside you that can outshine all the limitations of this world, if you stop resisting.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You'll find it difficult to keep your commitments, especially those you make to yourself. The written word is the single most effective tool you can wield now. Write what you will do, and you're 50 percent more likely to do it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

If you don't know where you're going, it's hard to know when you've arrived there. It's not too late to declare your destination or change it. A bold and public action will help you center yourself on a single goal.

Creators Syndicate

Glamorous hotels put on the ritz

Where did the word "ritzy" come from?

"Ritzy" comes from the Ritz hotels, named for their founder, Cesar Ritz. Cesar Ritz opened the first Ritz hotels in London and Paris in 1905. He had built his reputation in the luxury hotel business with positions in fashionable European hotels and resorts and his cultivated connections with the old money of Europe and served as a guide and mentor to the nouveau riches of America. After managing the new Savoy Hotel in London, Ritz opened his own luxury hotels, and his son carried on the tradition by opening Ritz hotels around the world.

The fame of the hotels quickly

made "the Ritz" a well-known symbol of opulence. F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1922 titled one of his stories about the Jazz Age "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz." Even today, people will disparage their own humble residences with comparisons to the Ritz. "To put on the ritz" came to mean "to indulge in ostentatious display," the meaning that Irving Berlin celebrated in his 1929 musical tribute to glitz, "Puttin' on the Ritz."

The derivative adjective "ritzy" was first recorded in 1920.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Put affair in past and do best to work it out with husband

Dear Abby: I am a 36-year-old married woman. "Vern" and I have been married for 10 years and are childless by choice.

We have had our share of problems, but for the most part, I've learned to put them in perspective. Eight months ago, I started flirting with a guy at work.

"Jason" is married with two small children. At first the flirtation seemed harmless. The next thing I knew, we were having a hard-heavy affair.

I have never been so drawn to any man. I became convinced that this was my last chance. Jason meant I was no longer in love with Vern, so I left my husband.

Vern was devastated. I didn't tell him there was someone else. I said I was unhappy, which was the truth. I got my own place, and the affair continued until Jason's wife became suspicious. Then Jason started pulling back. He said he was worried about not being able to see his kids. Finally, Jason told me he thought it would be a good idea for me to go back to Vern. I begged him to change his mind and said I'd be his other woman for as long as it takes.

I was so in love. He made me

laugh, listened to me and made me feel special. He was everything my husband wasn't.

I am now back with Vern. I care for him, but the spark is long gone. He goes out of his way to make things right for me, but he no longer trusts me because he's heard rumors. I want our marriage to work, but all I do is think about Jason.

—Confused in Alaska

Dear Confused: While you're thinking about Jason, please remember that although he was amusing and a good listener, and the chemistry was strong, he was also a liar and a cheater. He may have made you feel special, but when the chips were down, his wife and children were more important to him.

Your husband wasn't born yesterday. He still loves you. Vern took you back in spite of the rumors. You now have a second chance—but only if you reorganize your priorities. If you want your marriage to work, you and Vern will have to admit that you had issues before you met him, and seek professional counseling to work on them.

Dear Abby: I have known

Girl must let son of mother's boyfriend do an extra genny

Dear Annie: I'm a 16-year-old girl who started at a new high school in September. I've made lots of friends and even met some boys I'm getting to know. My problem is what happened last summer.

My mother is seriously dating a man who has two children, ages 15 and 16. We've known him for six years. His 16-year-old daughter and I are so close, we feel like sisters. The problem is his 15-year-old son, "Max." In June, Max wrote me a letter and told me that for the past two years, we had been in love with him. I felt the same way, and on several occasions, I took advantage of our feelings for each other.

However, this happened before I met some great guys at my new school.

I don't feel the same way about Max anymore, but he is still crazy about me. I know letting our relationship progress was wrong, and I'm going to have to live with what I did, but what should I do to help him get over me so we can still be friends? Avoiding him is not an option.

—Boston Student

Dear Boston: It might help to

explain to Max that the may one day be your stepbrother and you don't feel right about maintaining a romantic relationship. Tell him you think it's best if you care for each other only as brother and sister. He will be heartbroken and angry at first, but chances are, he will soon meet girls at school who interest him.

Annie's Mailbox
Stay friendly, but do not encourage his crush by flirting or alluding to last summer's activities. Treat him like a brother, and hopefully, he will accept it.

Dear Annie: "Richard" and I have dated for five years. He is kind, gentle, honest and makes me laugh. We became engaged on my 50th birthday, and shortly after, Richard moved in with me.

For the most part, things are great, but Richard is the biggest packrat and sloth I have ever met.

I am a very neat person, but I am not obsessive about it. However, we are combining two households and need to downsize. Richard refuses to discard anything, including old magazines, too-small or outdated clothing, worn-out shoes and endless amounts of junk. He has boxes full of old pens, loose nails, you

"Jerry" for four years. We met through my ex-boyfriend, "Paul." We have been dating for about nine months.

Paul and I have a child together, our daughter, "Elise," just turned 5. My ex and I rarely speak to each other, and when we do, it's only about Elise.

I love Jerry with all my heart and would never cheat on him. How can I convince him that I am no longer interested in Paul? Whenever we have an argument, he says, "Go back to Paul—maybe he can make you happy."

Would I be out of line if I told Jerry, "If you don't like the idea of me talking to my child's father, there's the door, and don't let it hit you on your way out?" We don't even live together, and he's trying to control me. How do you think it would be if we started living together—which we have discussed?

—Angry in Pennsylvania

Dear Angry: Jerry is insecure. Since you love him, do not give him an ultimatum. Because you share a child with Paul, there will always be contact of some sort. If Jerry is going to build a future with him, he must live with him until he is mature enough to do so.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box #940, 577 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90005. Write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.ueppress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

name it. On top of the hoarding, he leaves papers, food, cups and clothing all over.

I have begged Richard to clean up and de-clutter. I have silently cleaned up after him, hoping to be a role model. I have boxed things to give to charity, but he becomes angry. I have suggested a storage center. Nothing helps.

I love Richard and want to spend my life with him. But this relationship won't last if Richard doesn't figure out that he can't keep everything he has owned since childhood. This is driving me crazy. What can I do?

—L.A. Flancee

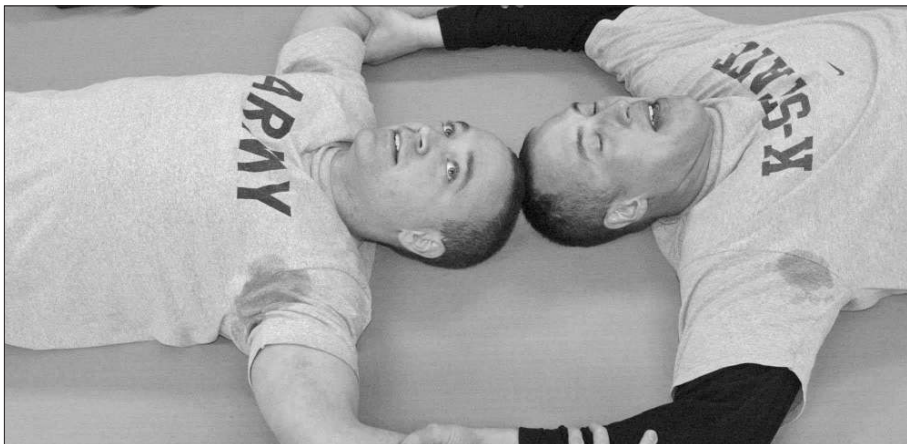
Dear L.A.: Richard is obsessive-compulsive, and unless he is willing to admit he has a problem and seek help, nothing will change.

Urging him to contact the Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation (ocfoundation.org) at 676 State St., New Haven, CT 06510, if he refuses to do this for the sake of your relationship, you might want to reconsider living together—now, or in the future.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.com or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90005.

Creators Syndicate

YOUR MONEY



Photos by The Washington Post

Army Capt. Lonnie Moore, right, works out with 1st Lt. Stephen Rice during a physical therapy workout at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Both men were wounded in Iraq. Moore, of Wichita, Kan., says he has already received a few job offers, but will remain at Walter Reed through March.

Wanted: Injured vets to fill job vacancies

BY ELLEN MCCARTHY

The Washington Post

Recovering troops in high demand among contractors

Army Capt. Lonnie Moore lost his right leg and — he thought — his career last April when his convoy was ambushed on the road to Ramadi, in central Iraq. The injury led to some dark days at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington as Moore, 29, began his recuperation and contemplated life outside the military.

Within months, however, he had received job offers from a munitions company, an information technology firm and the Department of Veterans Affairs. And that's without sending out a résumé.

"People tend to seek us out," Moore said of veterans, particularly those who have been injured. "They know we'll be an asset to their companies and that we're not going to let our injuries stand in the way. ... Everybody I've known that's gotten out, they're not having a hard time finding jobs."

Through broad initiatives and individual requests, corporations have been actively recruiting veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, turning military hospitals like Walter Reed into de facto hiring centers.

Job offers aren't being handed out carte blanche, and companies say talent and fit are still the priorities. But executives seeking out wounded troops say many of the skills acquired in the military are applicable in the private sector — particularly within companies that serve the government. A soldier who has led a platoon into war is probably capable of leading a unit at a private company, executives say. With government contracting in a boom, soldiers' security clearances and knowledge are also highly valued.

"They've got to be able to talk the language. And you can't teach a person that

language — it's a language you can only learn by being part of that culture," said Paul Evancoe, director of military operations at FNH USA Inc., a McLean, Va., weapons manufacturer with about 350 employees in the United States. The company is among those interested in hiring Moore.

The quest to seek an injured vet was both company-driven and personal, said Evancoe, who received a Purple Heart after being shot in Vietnam. Many FNH employees are veterans, so the company's atmosphere and values largely mirror that of the military, he added.

"If you take a guy and immerse him back into that culture ... it's going to be very positive. It's going to help the heal-

ing," Evancoe said. "It's not like I can hire every single guy, but when I have a job, I'm going to search out a veteran."

The Labor Department does not have statistics on job placement rates of veterans disabled in Afghanistan or Iraq. However, in 2003, the most recent statistics available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans had an unemployment rate of 4.5 percent, compared with 5.9 percent for nonveterans.

The same study found that 9 percent of veterans suffered from a service-related disability; their unemployment rate was comparable to that of their noninjured peers.

Jeanne Lehowicz, a vocational counse-

lor stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, said she has a steady stream of inquiries from executives and recruiters — sometimes dozens a week, and typically more than the 50 to 75 servicemenbers she is working with at any given time.

One day the call might be from a giant defense contractor from Bethesda, Md., and the next, a small biomedical firm from Montana, she said.

"It's overwhelming. You want to respond and say 'Oh here's this guy I've got for you,' but that's not always the case," Lehowicz said.

The organizers of a career fair at Walter Reed in December expected a dozen or so companies to participate. By the night of the fair, more than 30 companies, including BAE Systems PLC, Science Applications International Corp. and Oracle Corp., had set up booths to pass out brochures and collect names.

"The equipment that we work on and maintain for the military is the same as they would have used," said Eugene C. Renzi, president of defense systems at ManTech International Corp., a Fairfax, Va., government contractor that sent recruiters to the career fair. "So when they get out of the military, we can put them right to work and utilize the skills they already have."

Joe Davis, spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said outreach efforts among government contractors is partly driven by executives with military backgrounds. There is a de facto alumni network, he said, and a collective memory of the way disabled veterans were treated after previous conflicts, particularly Vietnam.



"Veterans are getting good jobs right now," says Army Capt. Lonnie Moore, who lost his leg last year. Sgt. Robert Faulk, a physical therapy assistant, helps with his recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

SEE VETERANS ON PAGE 21

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Bird flu poses deadly threat Chicago Tribune

The prospect of an avian flu pandemic has served to remind the United States and the world that the forces of nature can be far more lethal than anything created by man. The World Health Organization recently warned that the risk of pandemic poses the "greatest possible danger" to the world as the virus has become "entrenched, endemic and versatile."

The U.S. isn't on the brink of an avian flu epidemic, Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reassured last week. But the experts agree it is only a matter of time before some new, virulent strain of influenza will threaten the world. The government is gearing up to test the first doses of an experimental vaccine, is stockpiling anti-viral drugs and has boosted disease surveillance....

What makes entirely new flu strains like the bird flu so deadly is that most people have no immunity. Humankind is virgin territory, and the virus becomes an engine of death and disease with horrific consequences....

We know much more about influenza now than we did then.... All of that could slow or lessen the severity of an outbreak. But a new strain of flu has the potential to be a widespread killer.

Repeat 'don't ask, don't tell' The Miami Herald

The Pentagon policy on gays in the military, known as "don't ask, don't tell," isn't working. It hurts recruitment, impedes retention and costs too much. That's the conclusion of the just-released Government Accountability Office report that underlines the need to rethink this 12-year-old policy.

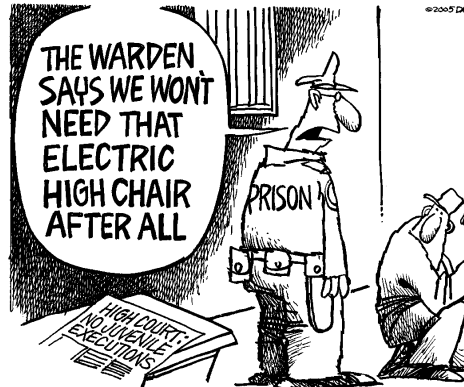
The report found that the Pentagon had to spend at least \$191 million to recruit and train replacements for some 9,500 soldiers discharged for their sexual orientation. Of that number, the GAO said, 750 held critical occupations in the military, including translators with skills in languages such as Arabic and Korean that are vital to existing U.S. security concerns....

Most of the discharged personnel wanted to remain in the service. More important, there is no evidence that they were causing problems. They ran afoul of the service rules because their sexual orientation became known, which, under the policy, is forbidden....

Perhaps "don't ask, don't tell" made sense at one time, relaxing the rule that banned homosexuality altogether. It makes no sense today. The policy should be repealed, and men and women who want to serve their country in the armed forces should be allowed to do so without regard to sexual orientation.

A case for regulation The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

The ChoicePoint Inc. debacle, the largest case of identity theft in U.S. history, shows why we need better privacy protection nationally. What happened? Crooks posed as check-cashing companies or debt-collection firms to gain access to ChoicePoint's database of personal data about 100 million people, including names, addresses, Social Security numbers and credit reports. These 50 fake com-



Reserve troops deserve better St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times

With ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military relies heavily on Reserve troops. Yet when these soldiers are wounded in the line of duty, too often they find they cannot rely on the military.

One of those is John Allen, an Army Special Forces team sergeant in Afghanistan, where he was seriously injured. Back home with damage to his brain, legs and vision, Allen sought a standard extension to his active-duty status so he could continue to receive medical care. Because of bureaucratic foot-dragging, however, Allen has been dropped from active duty several times, which meant that some of his medical appointments were canceled. Even his pregnant wife was refused treatment at a military hospital until a commander intervened.

In all, Allen suffered a nearly \$12,000 loss of pay and, as he described it, "intense and indescribable stress." Unfortunately, Allen's situation is far from unique....

The military has struggled to keep up with a growing reliance on Reserve troops, but unless it starts treating them better it will be difficult to attract new recruits....

It is a national shame, and Congress shouldn't wait for the military to get around to fixing the problem.

Bush's swelling government The Anniston (Ala.) Star

When Bill Clinton announced the "era of big government is over," soon-to-be-president George W. Bush wasn't listening. Or if he was listening, he wasn't paying attention. For today, in Washington, government is big and getting bigger.... But instead of advancing the Gingrich-Doyle agenda during his first term in office, Bush created a new Cabinet department, Homeland Security, and pushed through the USA Patriot Act that gave the government broad surveillance powers. Both of these increased the size of government and empowered Washington to oversee and regulate numerous state and individual activities....

To this, add the budget-busting Medicare prescription drug plan that will cost the nation who-knows-how-much before the decade is out. During Bush's first term, government did anything but shrink.

Fiscal conservatives and states-rights Republicans aren't buying it. Over at the Cato Institute, a conservative think-tank that usually supports the president, some

are openly hoping "that there would be an electoral rebuke of big (government) Republicans like there was when the tectonic plates shifted in 1994."

The problem with that, of course, is such a shift could erase the GOP's small majority, if the Democrats are able to turn the political tables and become the party of the small ("smart" would be the better word) government and fiscal responsibility. That would require dramatically changing the public perception of the Democratic Party, but with the Bush record to run against, it could happen.

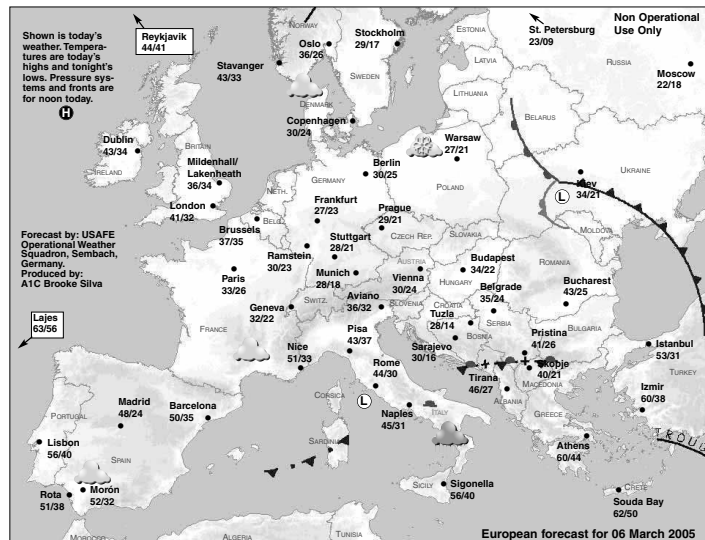
Less fodder for death row Los Angeles Times

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision Tuesday to bar the execution of juvenile murderers has come at a pivotal time in this nation's long and agonized debate over the death penalty.

Unlike in the cases of the 100-plus death row defendants released in recent years when DNA or other evidence proved them innocent, Christopher Simmons' guilt was not in doubt. Simmons was 17 and a Missouri high school junior when he and a friend entered Shirley Crook's house, bound the 46-year-old woman with duct tape, drove her to a state park and threw her from a bridge to drown in the water below. Before the crime, Simmons bragged to friends that they would "get away with it" because they were minors. Soon after his arrest, he not only confessed to Crook's murder but agreed to perform a videotaped re-enactment for police. A jury sentenced him to death.

The question before the high court was the fairness and propriety of Simmons' sentence.... Because teens are still emotionally immature, they cannot be held responsible in the same degree as adults for their actions, however unforgivable, wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy for a sharply divided court.

The high court's new ruling comes three years after it outlawed the death penalty for the mentally retarded. Both decisions were pointedly grounded in what the court describes as a changing national consensus on capital punishment. Those decisions dug in the same degree as adults for their actions, however unforgivable, wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy for a sharply divided court.



KEY: Sunny Pt. Cl. Cloudy Mostly cl. Cloudy

Shower Storms Rain Rain/snow Snow

Cold frnt. Warm frnt. Trough

Jet. Jet. Occluded S. St. frnt. Low High

AFRICA

Capa Town	84	10	Mogadishu	84	10
Dakar	74	61	Nairobi	85	58
Freeport	88	77	Rabat	62	41
Kinshasa	84	73	Tripoli	65	43

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	51	30	Manila	84	73
Bahran	75	57	Medan	30	52
Beijing	59	30	Montreal	38	22
Bombay	81	61	Riyadh	37	22
Buenos Aires	63	57	Rio de Jan.	38	21
Buenos Aires	63	57	Rio de Jan.	38	21
Calcutta	89	53	Singapore	69	60
Chengdu	58	30	Sydney	69	60
Chongqing	58	30	Tokyo	45	34



MIDEAST



TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Albany, N.Y.	62	51	Rain	41	32	City
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EUROPEAN FORECAST

Beneux: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rain and snow showers. Highs in the upper 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Britain, Ireland: Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Partly to mostly cloudy with isolated snow showers. Highs in the upper 20s to low 30s. Monday lows in the mid 20s.

France: Partly cloudy. In the north, highs in the lower 30s to low 40s. In the south, highs in the lower 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with isolated snow showers. Highs in the upper 20s to low 30s. Monday lows in the lower 20s to low 30s.

Southern Germany: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with isolated snow showers. Highs in the upper 20s to low 30s. Monday lows in the upper teens to low 20s.

Hungary: Mostly cloudy with morning snow showers. Highs in the mid 30s. Monday lows in the lower 20s.

Northern Italy: Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the 30s.

Southern Italy: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with rain and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 40s to mid 50s. Monday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Kosovo: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with afternoon snow showers. Highs in the lower 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the mid 20s to low 30s.

Norway: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 30s to low 40s. Monday lows in the mid 20s to low 30s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly to mostly cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the upper 40s to mid 50s. In the north, Monday lows in the mid 20s to low 30s. In the south, Monday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Turkey: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with rain showers. In the north, mid 40s to low 50s. In the south, mid 40s to low 50s. Monday lows in the upper 30s to low 40s.

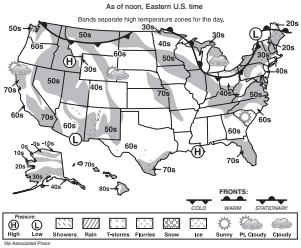
For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page at: <https://www.semabach.at.mil> <http://www.public.semabach.at.mil>

SUN & MOON

	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise (Baghdad)	6:07 AM	6:07 AM
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	6:58 AM	6:57 AM
Sunset (Baghdad)	6:04 PM	6:05 PM
Sunset (Frankfurt)	6:16 PM	6:18 PM

New moon 12 Mar 05 First 17 Mar 05 Full moon 25 Mar 05 Last 4 Apr 05

THE UNITED STATES OUTLOOK



Scheduled to **ETS** or **PCS**?

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New York Mets' Pedro Martinez pitches during the first inning against the St. Louis Cardinals on Friday at Roger Dean Stadium, in Jupiter, Fla. Martinez struck out three and gave up three hits in three innings.

Sosa, Martinez fitting right in

The Associated Press

Yes, Sammy Sosa's hop is just as joyful in a Baltimore Orioles uniform and Pedro Martinez's fastball is just as sizzling in New York Mets colors.

The two superstars, along with Mark Mulder, Carl Pavano, Derek Lowe and Jon Lieber, all made their debuts with new teams Friday.

Sosa homered and had two hits in Baltimore's 3-1 loss to the Florida Marlins at Fort Lauderdale, Fla. After sending a drive over the left-field wall in the seventh inning, Sosa inaugurated the post-homer routine he perfected with the Chicago Cubs, hopping in the batter's box then touching his heart and pointing skyward upon reaching home.

Sosa, playing DH because of a slight groin strain, came to the Orioles last month in a trade with the Cubs, who all but gave away the slugger after he wore out his welcome in the Windy City.

"Those guys love me already," he said. "I'm such a perfect fit here, I'm so happy to be in a new house. It's incredible, let me tell you the truth. I feel like I've been here forever."

At Jupiter, Fla., Martinez

picked up right where he left off last season. In three innings, the 33-year-old right-hander allowed three hits, struck out three and was credited with the win — a 7-5 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals — in his first outing since leaving Boston for a \$53 million, four-year contract with the Mets.

Martinez threw 60 pitches, but new Mets manager Willie Randolph had no problem letting Martinez go that long this early in spring training.

"We're not going to get crazy about pitch counts," Randolph said.

"We don't worry about that because he's in great shape. You see him work. He's not going to break. He'll be fine."

Mulder, on the other hand, was wild from the start and lasted just one inning for St. Louis. He walked four and gave up a two-run single to Cliff Floyd in his first appearance since he was traded by Oakland on Dec. 18.

"It's not that big a deal. I'm not that concerned with results in spring training. I just want to make good pitches," Mulder said. "Those are things you get out of the way now. As long as you're healthy and making good pitches, that to me is the only thing that matters."

At Kissimmee, Fla., Roger Clemens kicked off his 22nd major

league season with two scoreless innings for the Houston Astros in a 5-4 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

"I'm just glad to get everything under way," said Clemens, his right shoulder, elbow and ankle heavily wrapped in ice. "I felt really good out there."

Pirates 9, Yankees 6: At Bradenton, Fla., Pavano gave up three hits in two scoreless innings in his first start since signing as a free agent with New York. He struck out two, Ben Greive, trying to win a job on the Pittsburgh bench, went 2-for-3 with a double and three RBIs.

Braves 3, Dodgers 2: At Kissimmee, Lowe pitched three scoreless innings in his Los Angeles debut. Lowe, whose last appearance was in Boston's World Series-clinching victory, gave up only a single to Andrew Jones. Dodgers outfielder J.D. Drew got a chance to face his former team. Boomed lustily in his two at-bats by the pro-Arlanta crowd, he struck out both times.

Tigers 3, Phillies 0: At Lake-Land, Fla., Lieber made his first appearance with Philadelphia and gave up a hit, walked one and struck out a batter in three innings. Detroit prospect Tony Giaratano hit a two-run homer and Craig Monroe had an RBI double.

Canseco agrees to testify; others face subpoena

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Jose Canseco is ready to testify. Reluctant players and executives might be forced to appear before a congressional committee.

Canseco, the MVP-turned-best-selling author, had no qualms about testifying at a March 17 hearing on steroids in baseball.

"We'll be there on the 16th and 17th," Canseco's agent, Doug Ames, said Friday.

The House Government Reform Committee is prepared to subpoena witnesses, a person familiar with its deliberations said on condition of anonymity.

Jason Giambi, Canseco's former Oakland teammate, said it was "highly unlikely" he would testify before the committee. Boston pitcher Curt Schilling was unsure whether he would appear and whether the hearing would be productive.

"It depends on what it's for," Schilling said in Fort Myers. "I mean, if it is a McCarthy witch hunt all over again, then no. But, again, I don't know any of the specifics around what it entails and what's going on."

Mark McGwire, who combined with Canseco to form the Bash Brothers on the World Series champion Athletics, also was undecided.

"We're still evaluating," McGwire spokesman Marc Altieri said. "I can't say any way or the other."

Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig and executive vice president Sandy Alderson had not made their decisions, spokesman Rich Levin said, and San Diego General Manager Kevin Towers declined comment.

The players' association had not yet decided whether union head Donald Fehr would testify or what recommendation it would give to the invited players, according to union general counsel Michael Weiner.

"We think it's a little early to

talk about who's confirmed their attendance," said David Marin, a spokesman for Rep. Tom Davis, the Virginia Republican who chairs the committee.

At the Yankees' training camp, Giambi said he had a brief conversation with his agent, Arn Tellem, about the invitation.

"I have no idea what they are trying to do," Giambi said. "I'm just concentrating on playing baseball."

In December, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that Giambi told a federal grand jury in 2003 that he had used steroids. Barry Bonds, who was not invited by the committee, told the grand jury he used a substance that prosecutors believe contained steroids, the paper said.

Giambi has declined to discuss steroids publicly, but issued a general apology last month to teammates and fans. Bonds testily sidestepped questions when he arrived at spring training.

In an informal conversation with reporters from the Oakland Tribune and ESPN on Thursday, Bonds said performance-enhancing substances are not a big deal.

"You're talking about something that wasn't even illegal at the time," Bonds said. "All this stuff about supplements, protein shakes, whatever, Man, it's not like this is the Olympics... We're entertainers. If I can't go out there and somebody pays \$60 for a ticket, and I'm not in the lineup, who's getting cheated? Not me."

"So we all make mistakes. We all do things. We need to turn the page. We need to forget about the past and let us play the game. We're entertainers. Let us entertain."

Baltimore's Sammy Sosa and Rafael Palmeiro were invited to testify, as was Frank Thomas of the Chicago White Sox.

Sosa isn't ready to respond. "I don't know about that yet. I have to call my agent," he said.

AP Sports Writers David Ginsburg in Fort Lauderdale, Howard Ulman in Fort Myers and Bernie Wilson in San Diego contributed to this report

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Brees signs with Chargers

After breakout season, QB gets one-year, \$8M deal

By **BERNIE WILSON**

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Drew Brees was in an \$8 million mood on Friday.

The quarterback signed a one-year contract that more than quadruples his pay from last year, when he came off the scrap heap to lead the San Diego Chargers back to the playoffs for the first time in nine seasons.

The Chargers put the "franchise" tag on Brees on Feb. 17, meaning he'll get \$8,078,000 next year, or the average of the NFL's five highest-paid quarterbacks in 2004.

Brees returned from a vacation in Australia late Thursday night and signed the deal as soon as he could on Friday.

"I was ready and eager to get the thing official," said Brees, who made \$1.56 million in base pay last year.

Brees doesn't seem offended that the Chargers aren't interested in giving him a long-term deal — for now, anyway — or that coach Marty Schottenheimer has refused to entertain him as the starter for next year, meaning he'll have to compete with Philip Rivers in training camp.

"Of course I want to be here, and of course I want a long-term deal, but the main thing is, I want to be here, I want to be a part of this," he said. "I just think we can do something special."

Brees was still but cast aside

last offseason, when the Chargers were coming off an NFL-worst 4-12 record. Brees was an easy scapegoat after throwing 15 interceptions and just 11 touchdown passes, getting benched for five straight games and being yanked from two others.

General manager A.J. Smith declared that the Chargers needed to "upgrade" at quarterback, then swung a draft-day deal that brought highly touted prospect Philip Rivers to town.

But Rivers held out for half of training camp and Brees kept his job. He threw 27 touchdown passes and 27 interceptions, then swung a draft-day deal that brought highly touted prospect Philip Rivers to town.

OT McKenzie goes from Jets to Giants

The Associated Press

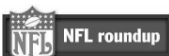
Kareem McKenzie is moving, but he won't be changing his stadium address.

The former New York Jets right tackle will play his games at the Meadowlands next season as a member of the New York Giants after signing a \$37.75 million, seven-year contract on Friday.

McKenzie's deal included a \$12.5 million signing bonus and topped the \$36 million fellow tackle Jonas Jennings got from San Francisco on Thursday.

The signing constituted a very profitable offseason for a position that has rarely been considered glamorous. Under McKenzie's deal and the contracts Jennings, Mike Wahle, Marco Rivera and Ben Hamilton signed on Thursday, NFL teams spent over \$134 million on offensive linemen in the first three days of the free-agent signing period.

The NFC champion Philadelphia Eagles spent their dollars on defensive tackle Jason Babin. The Eagles re-signed Pro Bowl middle linebacker Jeremiah Trotter to a \$15 million, five-year contract.



Trotter's contract includes a \$4 million signing bonus. After two back-to-back years in Washington, Trotter returned to Philly last season and helped the Eagles lead the NFC in fewest points allowed at 16.3 per game.

Trotter started just seven games for the NFC champs, but his peers still voted him to a third Pro Bowl.

New Cleveland Browns coach Romeo Crennel, whose New England Patriots shut down Philadelphia in the Super Bowl, quickly filled his hole in the secondary by signing Baltimore Ravens cornerback Gary Baxter to a six-year contract. Anthony Henry, who led the Browns with four interceptions last season, signed with Dallas on Wednesday.

Crennel's already shaky offense added another question mark when quarterback Kelly Holcomb accepted a four-year deal from the Buffalo Bills. He opted to back up J.P. Losman rather

than vie for the starting job in Cleveland, leaving the Browns with Luke McCown and Josh Harris at the quarterback position.

Holcomb was initially expected to re-sign with the Browns after the team released starting quarterback Brady Quinn. But talks with Cleveland broke down this week when Crennel suggested he had other plans. The signing of ex-Giants were active on Friday, Chicago back Kurt Warner was in Chicago talking to the Bears. Defensive lineman Lance Legree, primarily a two-year player, signed with the Jets.

New York also formally announced the signing of Derrick Byrd, the ex-Kansas City Chief who will back up Curtis Martin at running back, and signed Denver tight end Jeb Putzier to an offer sheet worth \$12.5 million. The Broncos have a week to match it.

In other signings: ■ **Clayton Oliver** Ross signed a five-year contract with the Arizona Cardinals. The 6-foot-5, 322-pound lineman started 16 regular-season games and both of Pittsburgh's playoff games last season.

■ **Cleveland** signed punter Kyle Richardson, who was with Cincinnati last season.

■ **Buffalo** signed free agent Mike Gandy to help bolster its offensive line. Drafted by Chicago in the third round in 2001, he started five games at right guard last season and 14 at left tackle in 2003.

■ **Miami** signed free agent safety Travarres Tillman to help rebuild its depleted secondary. He had five tackles in six games with the Carolina Panthers last season before being sidelined by a broken arm.

■ **Tampa Bay** re-signed veteran free agent tight end Dave Moore.

He will return for his 12th season with the Buccaneers after making three catches for 17 yards in 15 games last season. He also is the team's long snapper. Moore ranks third in Bucs history with 161 games played.

■ **Arizona** re-signed running back Damien Anderson and released running back Larry Nde

Coles dealt to Jets; Skins get WR Moss

The Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — The Washington Redskins finally traded disgruntled receiver Laveranues Coles back to the New York Jets on Saturday and got the speedy Santana Moss in return.

Moss' agent, Drew Rosenhaus, said in a phone interview the deal was contingent on both players passing physicals. Moss had his physical scheduled for Monday at Redskins Park. A source within the league, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, also said Coles got the new deal he wanted, which held up the trade for the last week.

Terms of the deal weren't available. A message left for Coles' agent, Roosevelt Barnes, was not immediately returned.

Coles met with coach Joe Gibbs twice after the season to state his desire to leave the Redskins, following an unsatisfying year in the team's conservative offense.

He had 90 catches for 950 yards for a career-low 10.6 yards a catch and only one touchdown

in the Redskins' 6-10 season in the year before, under pass-oriented coach Steve Spurrier. Coles had 82 receptions for 1,204 yards and six touchdowns.

Coles emerged as a favorite of Chad Pennington in 2002, but left the Jets as a restricted free agent after the season, when the team declined to match the Redskins' seven-year, \$35 million offer — including a \$13 million bonus. He was critical of the Jets and coach Herman Edwards after he left, though it appears the organization is willing to look past that.

As for Moss, the game-breaking receiver had a breakout year in 2003, with 1,105 yards and 10 touchdowns. But his productivity slipped in 2004, when he had 45 catches for 838 yards and five touchdowns while battling through a sore hamstring. He also was critical of his role in the Jets' conservative offense, wondering why he didn't get the ball more.

Moss is entering the final year of his contract, and Rosenhaus expects to have the receiver signed to a new deal shortly after the trade is completed.

Agassi falls to Ljubicic in return of Davis Cup

The Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — Andre Agassi stumbled in his return to Davis Cup play, and Andy Roddick stepped up to square things for the Americans.

Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic beat Agassi in straight sets in Friday's opening match. Roddick bounced back after a first-set loss to defeat Mario Ancic 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 in the second and final match of the day.

Ljubicic downed Agassi 6-3, 7-6 (7-0), 6-3 in the match of Croatia's No. 1 player against the U.S. team's No. 2.

The first round was to resume on Saturday, with twins Mike and Bob Bryan scheduled to face Ljubicic and Ancic.

Roddick will play Ljubicic in Sunday's first match, with Agassi slated to go against Ancic in the fifth and final match of the first-round competition.

The loss was only the sixth in 36 Davis Cup matches for Agassi, who has played on three championship teams.

The 25-year-old Ljubicic, off to a fine start on the tour this year, took control of the match with his serves, often in the mid-130-mph range and as high as 141 mph.

On Saturday, Slovakia eliminated defending champion Spain, taking an insurmountable 3-0 lead after Saturday's doubles match to advance to the quarterfinals.

Maier wins men's downhill on Kvitfjell, Norway — Herma Maier won a World Cup

Sports briefs

downhill on Ljubljana's Olympic course Saturday, while Bode Miller finished fourth and extended his overall lead.

Maier, one of the greatest downhillers of all time but a non-winner in Norway since 2001, covered the 3,025-meter Olympia-bakken in 1 minute, 46.10 seconds. Austrian countryman Mario Scheiber was runner-up for the second straight downhill, finishing 0.13 seconds behind.

Maier's victory was his first in the downhill this season. He has 49 wins in the downhill, super giant slalom and giant slalom, one short of his chances of becoming the first American since Phil Mahre in 1983 to win the overall title.

Ambrosi Hoffmann of Switzerland took third, 0.31 off Maier's pace. It was his best result of the season.

Miller, coming off two disappointing gate races last weekend in Slovenia in which he scored no points, was 0.65 back as he improved his chances of becoming the first American since Phil Mahre in 1983 to win the overall title.

Miller led Kachibay by 57 points (1,303 to 1,246) — going into Sunday's super-G. Maier is third with 1,066. Five races remain, and each victory is worth 100 points.

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Andretti, Penske lead IndyCar into 10th season

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS
The Associated Press

Helio Castroneves' fence-climbing skills got a little rusty.

The two-time Indianapolis 500 champion performed his scaling victory celebration only once last year. And that didn't come until the IndyCar Series season finale, when "Spiderman" won for the first time in 19 races.

"It was hard, all season long waiting to win a race. ... It was a great relief," he said. "I don't want to wait that long to win this year."

Castroneves won't have to if Team Penske can pick up with the momentum it built at the end of last season.

Not only did Castroneves win the finale at Texas, he finished the season with an IRL-record four straight poles. The Penske team obviously was figuring out car setups with the smaller 3.0-liter engines the series had to use after the Indianapolis 500, and are unchanged this year.

"It was a learning curve, and we learned a lot with that situation," Castroneves said.

Sam Hornish Jr. started on the front row alongside his Penske

2005 IRL schedule

March 6 — Toyota Indy 300, Home-Depot, Ft. Worth, Texas
March 19 — XM Satellite Radio Indy 300, Arrowhead, Ariz.
April 3 — Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Fla.
April 30 — Indy Japan 300, Suzuka
May 25 — Indianapolis 500, Indianapolis
June 11 — Bombardier 500, Fort Worth, Texas
June 25 — SunTrust Indy Challenge, Richmond, Va.
July 3 — Argo Mortgage Indy 300, Kansas City, Kan.
July 14 — Firestone Indy 300, Glendale, Tenn.
July 21 — Michigan Indy 400, Brooklyn
Aug. 11 — Delphi Indy 300, Joliet, Ill.
Aug. 21 — Honda Indy 225, Fountain, Colo.
Aug. 28 — TBA, Sonoma, Calif.
Sept. 11 — Firestone Indy 300, St. Louis
Sept. 25 — Watkins Glen Indy Grand Prix N.Y.
Oct. 16 — Toyota Indy 400, Fontana, Calif.

teammate twice during that four-race stretch and rolled off from the No. 3 spot another time.

Penske had booked victories last year, with two-time IRL champion Castroneves winning his debut race with his new team — a jump ahead of Castroneves — in the season opener at Home-Depot-Miami Speedway.

Andretti Green Racing's four-driver team dominated in the season, winning eight of the 14 races with 36 top-five finishes.

Tony Kanaan became the first driver in a major racing series to finish every lap — 3,305 in 16 races — and won the title.

Teammate Dan Wheldon was second. Dario Franchitti and Bryan Herta, the other Andretti Green drivers, were sixth and ninth.

"Well, we set the standard for sure," Kanaan said. "Right now, yeah, they're definitely looking at us, and they respect us. But you know, we're also looking — we're looking for Penske, we're looking for Rahal."

All will be at Home-Depot-Miami Speedway on Sunday for the start of the IRL's 10th season.

Hornish has won three of the four IRL races on the track. The 300-mile race is where Kanaan had his worst 2004 finish — eighth in the opener before 15 straight top fives that included three victories.

This will be the IRL's longest season with 17 races — including its first road-course events.

The IRL will break from its all-oval format in the third race this season, on a temporary road course through downtown St. Petersburg, Fla. The series also will

run on road courses in Sonoma, Calif., and Watkins Glen, N.Y., later in the year.

Former driving champion Michael Andretti, who co-owns the team with Kim Green, got an IRL title in his just second season as an owner.

Roger Penske won 11 national open-wheel championships over three decades before moving from CART, but the car owner goes into his fourth IndyCar season without a title. Buddy Rice finished third in points and won the Indianapolis 500 for the team owned by former driver Bobby Rahal and late night talk show host David Letterman.

There are 22 drivers on 13 teams this season.

IRL founder Tony George is even a team owner now, having acquired the assets of Kelley Racing this offseason.

"Why? Because I believe in this series. I believe in the opportunity it represents," George said. As the offseason wound down, it became obvious that we needed a car count. We were going to need to keep all that equipment that Tom had for sale in the system. There was a lot of teams looking at acquiring bits and pieces of it. But I



Michael Andretti, above, made a successful transition from driver to team owner. Andretti Green's Tony Kanaan won the IRL title last season, and his three teammates all finished in the top 10.

felt that the best opportunity was to try and keep it together for someone."

Ed Carpenter, George's second-year stepson, will drive the car for Vision Racing LLC. George has promised his ownership will not influence decisions and rulings by race officials.

Rahala Patrick moves from the Toyota Atlantic Series to become the third woman in the IndyCar Series. She's part of Rahal Letterman's three-car team with Rice and Vitor Meira.

Men's conference basketball tournament scoreboard

America East Conference

At Birmingham University Events Center
Vestal, N.Y.
First Round
Friday, March 4
Md.-Baltimore County 78, N. Hampshire 73
Stony Brook 66, Hartford 46
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 5
Albany, N.Y. vs. Binghamton
Delaware vs. Maryland-Baltimore County
Northeastern vs. Stony Brook
Boston University vs. Maine
Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
Albany-Binghamton vs. Vermont
Maryland-Baltimore County winner vs. Boston-Boston University winner
Championship
At Higher-Seeded Team
Saturday, March 12
Semifinal winners

Atlantic Sun Conference

At The Club Event Center
Nashville, Tenn.
First Round
Friday, March 4
Gardner-Webb 84, Tennessee 72
Central Florida 81, Mercer 68
Belmont 67, Georgia State 61
Central Florida 66, Lipscomb 60
Quarterfinals
Friday, March 4
Gardner-Webb 77, Jacksonville 74
Central Florida 66, Belmont 60
Championship
Saturday, March 5
Gardner-Webb vs. Central Florida

Big Sky Conference

First Round
Saturday, March 5
Eastern Washington vs. Montana
Webster State at Sacramento State
At Memorial Center
Portland, Ore.
Semifinals
Tuesday, March 8
Montana State vs. higher-seeded first-round winner
Portland State vs. lower-seeded first-round winner
Championship
Wednesday, March 9
Semifinal winners

Big South Conference

First Round
Tuesday, March 1
Charleston Southern 66, Liberty 60
High Point 86, N.C.-Asheville 93, OT
Western Carolina vs. Coastal Carolina
Birmingham-Southern 69, Radford 40
Semifinals
Thursday, March 3
Charleston Southern 58, High Point 55
Western Carolina 79, Birmingham-Southern 54
Championship
Saturday, March 5
Charleston Southern at Winthrop

Colonial Athletic Association

At Richmond Coliseum
Richmond, Va.
First Round
Friday, March 4
William & Mary 68, James Madison 54
Delaware 76, Towson 56
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 5
Del. Dilmington vs. William & Mary
Drexel vs. Hofstra
Virginia Commonwealth vs. Delaware
N.C.-Wilmington vs. George Mason
Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
Del. Dilmington vs. Virginia Commonwealth
Drexel-Hofstra winner vs. North Carolina-Wilmington/George Mason winner
Championship
Monday, March 7
Semifinal winners

Horizon League

First Round
Tuesday, March 1
Wright State 61, Butler 57
Loyola-Chicago 63, Youngstown State 75
Illinois-Chicago 54, Cleveland State 65
At U.S. Cellular
Milwaukee
Second Round
Friday, March 4
Detroit 61, Wright State 61
Loyola of Chicago 67, Illinois-Chicago 81
Semifinals
Saturday, March 5
Wisconsin-Green Bay vs. Milwaukee
Missouri-Milwaukee vs. Loyola of Chicago
Championship
Saturday, March 5
Milwaukee
Championship
Saturday, March 8
Semifinal winners

Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

At HSEC Arena
Buffalo, N.Y.
First Round
Friday, March 4
Catholic 62, Marist 60
Monmouth 68, Loyola, Md. 67
St. Peter's 67, Fairfield 60
Rider vs. Catholic
Fairfield vs. Monmouth
Semifinals
Saturday, March 5
Niagara vs. St. Peter's-Iona winner
Fairfield-Catholic winner vs. Fairfield-Manhattan winner
Championship
Monday, March 7
Semifinal winners

Mid-Centennial Conference

At John G. Hammons Arena
Tulsa, Okla.
First Round
Friday, March 4
Oral Roberts vs. Southwestern
Missouri-Kansas City vs. Oakland, Mich.
Semifinals
Saturday, March 5
Indiana-Purdue-Indianapolis vs. Western Illinois
Valparaiso vs. Chicago State

Missouri Valley Conference

Semifinals
Monday, March 7
Oral Roberts-Southern Illinois winner vs. IUPUI-Indiana-Western Illinois winner
UMC-Caskland winner vs. Valparaiso-Chicago State winner
Championship
Tuesday, March 8
Semifinal winners
Missouri Valley Conference
At Save the Bay Center
St. Louis
First Round
Friday, March 4
Indiana State 63, Bradley 61
Drake 82, Evansville 68
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 5
Southern Illinois vs. Indiana State
Western Illinois vs. Southwest Missouri State
Wichita State vs. Drake
Creighton vs. Illinois State
Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
Southern Illinois-Illinois State winner vs. Northern Iowa-SW Missouri State winner
Wichita State-Drake winner vs. Creighton-Illinois State winner
Championship
Monday, March 7
Semifinal winners

Northeast Conference

Semifinals
Saturday, March 5
Monmouth, N.J. vs. Cornell, N.Y. 53
Fairleigh Dickinson 76, St. Francis 60
Wagner 68, Robert Morris 67
St. Francis, N.J. vs. St. Francis, Pa. 67
Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
Wagner at Monmouth, N.J.
Long Island Univ. at Fairleigh Dickinson
Championship
Wednesday, March 9
Semifinal winners

Ohio Valley Conference

First Round
Tuesday, March 7
Tennessee Tech 72, Eastern Illinois 68
New Orleans vs. Troy, Sanford 60
Eastern Kentucky 74, Tennessee Tech 68
Tennessee Tech vs. New Orleans 58
At The Gaylord Entertainment Center
Nashville, Tenn.
Semifinals
Friday, March 4
Austin Peay 67, Tennessee Tech 61
Eastern Ky. 69, Southeast Missouri 52
Championship
Saturday, March 5
Austin Peay vs. Eastern Kentucky

Patriot League

First Round
Friday, March 4
At The Mark Center
Worcester, Mass.
Lehigh 77, Colby 66
Holy Cross 76, Army 42
Semifinals
Friday, March 4
American 85, Navy 63
Championship
Saturday, March 5
Bucknell 70, Lafayette 34

Southern Conference

Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
At The First Center
Worcester, Mass.
Holy Cross vs. Lafayette
At The Soka Pavilion
Levittown, Pa.
Bucknell-Lafayette winner vs. American
Championship
Friday, March 11
Semifinal winners
Southern Conference
At Chesapeake Center
Chattanooga, Tenn.
Wednesday, March 2
Elon 64, Western Carolina 57
Georgia Southern 68, Western Carolina 57
Appalachian State 62, The Citadel 59
Quarterfinals
Thursday, March 3
Dayton 67, Elon 57
N.C.-Greensboro 73, Georgia Southern 71
Chattanooga 77, East Tennessee State 79
Appalachian State 63, Col. of Charleston 60
Semifinals
Friday, March 4
N.C.-Greensboro vs. Davidson 68
Chattanooga 57, Appalachian State 51
Championship
Saturday, March 5
N.C.-Greensboro vs. Chattanooga

Sun Belt Conference

At Denton, Texas
First Round
Friday, March 4
Florida International 60, Alabama 57
At The Super IT
Arkansas State 77, New Mexico State 63
At The Super IT
Arkansas State 77, New Mexico State 63
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 5
Arkansas-Little Rock vs. Florida International
Denver vs. Arkansas State
Semifinals
Saturday, March 6
Denver vs. Arkansas State
Arkansas-Little Rock vs. New Orleans
La-Lafayette vs. Virginia Tech State
Championship
Saturday, March 6
Denver-Arkansas State winner vs. La-Lafayette-Virginia Tech State winner
Semifinals
Monday, March 7
Denver-Arkansas State winner vs. La-Lafayette-Virginia Tech State winner
Championship
Tuesday, March 8
Semifinal winners

West Coast Conference

At The Leavoy Center
Santa Clara, Calif.
First Round
Friday, March 4
Pepperdine 91, Loyola Marymount 79
San Francisco 85, Portland 50
Second Round
Saturday, March 5
San Diego vs. Pepperdine
San Francisco vs. San Francisco
Semifinals
Saturday, March 5
Gonzaga vs. San Francisco
Pepperdine winner vs. Santa Clara
Santa Clara vs. San Francisco
Championship
Saturday, March 7
Semifinal winners

American Ousts Navy in overtime

The Associated Press

LEWISBURG, Pa. — Matej Cervenik scored a career-high 30 points and Linas Lekavicius scored with 4.7 seconds left in overtime to help American beat Navy 85-83 in the quarterfinals of the Patriot League Tournament on Friday.

American (16-11) plays Bucknell, which beat Lafayette 70-54, on Sunday.

Navy's David Hooper made his fifth three-pointer with 34 seconds left to tie the score 83-83 before Lekavicius' game-winner.

Navy freshman Corey Johnson made a three-point shot as time expired in regulation to tie the score 77-77 and force overtime.

Raunada Petruskas and Andre Ingram each had 13 points for American and Lekavicius added 12.

Paul Fanning and Greg Sprink each scored 20 points for Navy (9-19) and Hooper added 17.

Holy Cross 76, Army 42: At Worcester, Mass., Kevin Harty scored 16 points as top-seeded Holy Cross pulled away in the second half for a victory over Army in the first round of the Patriot League tournament.

Holy Cross (23-5), which won its 15th straight game, will play Lehigh at home in the semifinals on Sunday. Lehigh, the defending tournament champion, defeated Colgate 77-60 on Friday.

Matt Bell led Army (3-24) with 15 points.

Bryant helps L.A. stay over .500

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Lakers have been sitting on the playoff bubble all season, and it's starting to feel uncomfortable. So Kobe Bryant took matters into his own hands.

Bryant scored 40 of his 40 points in the final 2:15 and the Lakers snapped a four-game losing streak with a 108-103 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Friday night. It was Bryant's 37th career game with 40 or more points, and his seventh this season.

Caron Butler had 20 points and Lamar Odom added 18 points and 11 rebounds, helping prevent the Lakers from slipping under the .500 mark for the first time since they were 3-4.

"That was a big motivational factor for us," Bryant said. "We knew this was a big game and pretty much a must-win situation against a great team, and we were able to pull it off."

Bryant hasn't been on a team that lost five straight since he was a high school freshman. The Lakers haven't lost more than four straight since the 1993-94 season, when they dropped their final 10 games with Magic Johnson coaching the team.

"We were on a four-game skid, and it is important for us to get off that skid," Bryant said. "No way did we want to lose five games in a row. I don't like losing two in a row, let alone five in a row."

The Lakers shot 51.9 percent from the field, despite going 1-for-18 from behind the three-point line. The Lakers shot 51.9 percent from the field, despite going 1-for-18 from behind the three-point line. The Lakers shot 51.9 percent from the field, despite going 1-for-18 from behind the three-point line.

"I know a lot of people don't even think we're even going to make the playoffs. But there's no reason why we can't slide up. That's our mentality," Bryant said.



Roundup

Dick Nowitzki had 23 points and 13 rebounds and Jerry Stackhouse scored 19 points for the Mavericks, who have lost three of four following a six-game winning streak. The Mavericks have lost 27 of their last 28 against the Lakers in Los Angeles, the only victory coming last season.

Celtics 104, Bobcats 84: At Boston, Antoine Walker and Ricky Davis each scored 18 points and Gary Payton added 10 in his return to Boston's lineup. Boston is 4-0 since Walker returned to the team last week in a trade with Atlanta.

Payton, who re-signed Friday after being waived by Atlanta on Tuesday, played 21 minutes. He was traded to the Hawks — along with Tom Gugliotta, Michael Stewart and a future first-round pick — last week in the deal that brought Walker back to Boston.

Shawna O'Neal had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Charlotte. **Heat 111, Knicks 89:** Grant Hill scored 29 points and rookie Dwight Howard added 20 points and 15 rebounds to help Orlando snap New York's three-game winning streak.

Kevin Cato added 14 points, Steve Francis had 13 points and nine assists and rookie Jameer Nelson had 11 points and seven assists for the Magic.

Stephon Marbury led the Knicks with 22 points.

Warriors 103, Wizards 90: At Washington, Jason Richardson scored 16 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter and also had eight rebounds, four assists and three blocks for Golden State.

Troy Murphy added 20 points and 14 rebounds for the Warriors. Larry Wozniak scored 27 points for the Wizards.



The Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant, left, passes the ball past the Dallas Mavericks' Dirk Nowitzki during the second half Friday night.

Heat 104, Kings 83: At Miami, Dwyane Wade scored 22 points and Miami made Alonzo Mourning's formal homecoming a good one, getting double-digit scoring from all five starters.

Shaquille O'Neal had 18 points, giving him 23,177 for his career and tying him with Adrian Dantley for 17th in NBA history. Eddie Jones had 17 points — including a perfect 5-for-5 night — from three-point range in Miami's fourth straight victory.

Mourning, who rejoined the Heat this week, played the final 3:37 and finished with four points and four rebounds.

Grizzlies 86, Raptors 75: Shane Battier scored 12 of his career-high 33 points in the fourth quarter to help host Memphis rally for coach Mike Fratello's 600th career victory.

Hornets 92, Jazz 85: J.R. Smith and P.J. Brown each scored 14 points to help host New Orleans snap Utah's three-game winning streak.

Jackson Vroman added 12 points and nine rebounds. Andrei Kirilenko led Utah with 21 points.

Timberwolves 103, Bucks 97: At Minneapolis, Wally Szczerbiak scored 28 points, Kevin Garnett added 25 and Anthony Carter had a season-high 13 assists for Minnesota.

Michael Redd had 24 points and seven rebounds for Milwaukee.

Spurs 102, Bulls 99: At San Antonio, Tim Duncan made an 18-foot jumper with 38 seconds left to break a tie and Manu Ginobili added four late free throws for San Antonio.

Duncan finished with 31 points and 13 rebounds. Tony Parker had 25 points and eight assists and Ginobili added 19 points — 13 in the second half.

Pacers 106, Blazers 97: Reggie Miller and Stephen Jackson scored 24 points each and Indiana spoiled Portland coach Kevin Pritchard's debut at home.

The Pacers snapped a three-game losing streak. Shaheed Absoud-Rahim led Portland with 27 points. Pritchard took over the Blazers as interim coach this week when the team unexpectedly fired Maurice Cheeks.

Sonics 95, Pistons 87: At Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 18 points and Jerome James had season highs of 16 points and seven rebounds for Seattle against Detroit's bruising front line.

Richard Hamilton led Detroit with 15 points. The Pistons were coming off a loss in Phoenix on Thursday night that snapped their eight-game winning streak.

Pacers put O'Neal on injured list

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — All-Star forward Jermaine O'Neal was placed on the injured list Friday by the Indiana Pacers one day after he sprained his right shoulder in a game at Denver.

O'Neal has a subluxated sprain

of the right shoulder and will miss at least five games. He had an MRI examination before

Friday night's 106-97 victory over Portland, then watched the game from the end of the bench, his arm in a sling.

The Pacers also waived forward Michael Curry and signed veteran free agent forward Dale Davis, who was waived by New Orleans this week.

O'Neal was injured with 4½ minutes left in the second quarter against the Nuggets when his right arm was knocked back by Denver's Francisco Elson.

"It was the most painful thing I've ever been through in my career, but it's part of the game," O'Neal said.

Pistons sign C Campbell

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — The Detroit Pistons added depth to their frontcourt Friday by signing center Ed Campbell.

The Pistons used Campbell, 36, to guard Shaquille O'Neal during last season's NBA Finals victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Bulls' Deng out 2-4 weeks

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bulls placed rookie Luol Deng on the injured list Friday because of a sprained right ankle that is expected to sideline him 2-4 weeks.

Deng, a 6-foot-8 guard-forward, was injured in the opening minute against Houston on Tuesday night when he stepped on the foot of Rockets center Yao Ming.

Deng, the seventh overall pick in the draft, is averaging 12.2 points and 5.4 rebounds in 54 games this season.

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Rebirth: Defense, Gordon's finishing kick fuel Bulls' run

REBIRTH, FROM BACK PAGE

took over, with players never sure of their role. Paxson kept prep-to-pro projects Chandler and Curry, and shed anyone who wasn't a tenacious, defensive-minded player.

He picked up Kirk Hinrich in his first draft, then hit upon a bonanza last summer. In addition to taking Gordon with the No. 3 pick, he traded for Luol Deng, the seventh pick. He added Chris Duhon and signed Andres Nocioni, who'd spent the past two years playing in Spain before helping Argentina win gold in the Athens Olympics.

Paxson dumped high-priced, long-term contracts to give the Bulls salary-cap flexibility.

"Nobody's ever had a place here, as far as knowing what

you've got to come in and do," Chandler said. "Now I feel we've put together a nucleus that each guy has his individual thing that's making us win."

It starts with defense. The Bulls didn't allow 100 points for 26 straight games from Dec. 4 to Jan. 24, and are holding opponents to 42.2 percent shooting, second in the NBA. They're sixth in the league in scoring defense.

On offense, Curry, Hinrich, Gordon and Deng average in double figures. Gordon (14.6) and Deng (12.2) rank second and third among rookies, and Gordon is fifth in the NBA in three-point percentage (44.7).

Gordon is generating some star power, too, thanks to his knack for monster fourth quarters. He's had double-figure fourth quarters

in 16 games, most of any player in the NBA.

"I told him he might as well just stay in the locker room and we'll just get a buzzer for him for the fourth quarter," Chandler joked. "He'll run out and rip off his cape and get the crowd going."

Some fans have even dubbed him Ben "Rhymes with Jordan" Gordon.

"It's flattering, but I try to block that out," Gordon said. "I shouldn't even be mentioned in the same sentence as him. I know fans don't mean anything and they're just having fun. But as a player, you have so much respect for a guy like that. I kind of just want to shy away from that."

The Bulls aren't dynasty material just yet. They still turn the ball over way too much, a whopping 17.5 average per game. They've

gotten lax on defense lately, allowing 100 points or more in 11 of their past 14 games entering Saturday's game at Milwaukee.

In Tuesday's blowout loss to Houston, the Rockets had a double-digit lead by the end of the first quarter and led by as many as 39. Tracy McGrady scored 32 despite not playing in the fourth quarter, and Yao Ming had more points (14) than minutes (11).

"We've been feeling a little too good about our defense," Bulls coach Scott Skiles said after that game. "Hopefully, this will be something that knocks us out of it and will bring us down to earth."

Fans, though, aren't likely to abandon their giddy optimism. Bulls' first five home games since out of the average attendance of 19,439 trails only Detroit, Dallas, Miami and New York.

Mickelson continues birdie barrage at Doral

Leads Andrade by two after near-record 36-hole score

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Phil Mickelson was atop the leader board for the ninth consecutive round in stroke play, and no one was terribly surprised — least of all, his closest pursuer Friday in the Ford Championship at Doral.

Mickelson showed up at Doral nearly five hours before his tee time to fine-tune a game that appears to need no work, then played the Blue Monster without a bogey for a 6-under 66 that gave him a two-shot lead over Billy Andrade.

"I don't know what the big hoopla about him is," Andrade said after a 66. "He's one of the best players in the world. He has been one of the best players in the world since he was 12. When you get guys that are that talented and you get on rolls, they're obviously tough to beat."

Mickelson is on a roll in second rounds; his average score is 64.8 in five tournaments. That includes a 60 in Phoenix, which gave him a share of the lead. He's been there ever since, including a wire-to-wire victory last month at Pebble Beach.

"The only thing that matters is leading on Sunday," said Mickelson, whose 14-under 130 total was one short of the 36-hole record at Doral. "That's kind of the goal right now."

Mickelson was the first to concede that this tournament is far from over. There are a bevy of world-class players on the Blue

Monster, and several remain in range.

Two-time Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal had a 69 and was at 11-under 133, and Billy Mayfair birdied three of the last four holes for a 67 and was another shot back.

Tiger Woods went eight consecutive holes without a par — that included three straight bogeys for the second time this year — for a 2-under 70 that put him in a pack of players at 9-under 135 that included No. 1 Vijay Singh, David Toms and defending champion Craig Parry.

There were so many players jockeying for position that when Sergio Garcia missed a par putt on the 18th hole, he dropped 10 spots on the leader board, down to 8-under 136 with Retief Goosen and Jim Furyk.

"There's so many good players right there," Mickelson said. "I just feel like I've got to go out and keep pushing to make birdies if I want to stay there."

When Andrade chipped in from 50 feet for birdie on the ninth hole, that broke a 10-way tie for the lead. Before long, it became a race between him and Mickelson to see who wound up on top going into the weekend. They were on different sides of the course, and the final hole was decisive.

Andrade finished on the 18th hole, and he pulled his tee shot into the water. After taking a drop and hitting into shaggy grass atop a bunker, he had to make a slick 20-footer to salvage bogey.

Mickelson looked like he might be in trouble when he fanned his tee shot on the

par-5 eighth, headed behind some palm trees at best or into the water at worst. Instead, it smacked a fan in the right shoulder and bounced back into the short grass.

"Just another fairway hit," Mickelson said with a sneaky grin.

He finished on the par-3 ninth with a 7-iron into 8 feet for his 16th birdie of the tournament.

"There's still two days left here, and I'm going to put up a great fight," Andrade said. "And hopefully, it's enough to beat him and everybody else."

The Blue Monster, already susceptible without strong wind, was softer because of overnight rain.

Els trails Jimenez by one in Dubai

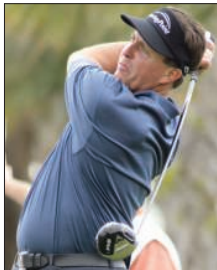
DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Miguel Angel Jimenez posted a tidy 4-under 68 on Saturday to take a one-shot lead in the Dubai Desert Classic.

After making a four-putt double bogey from 20 feet on the first hole, Ernie Els made seven birdies, shot 67 and enters the final round one stroke behind the leader.

"I still don't know what I did there on the first hole," said Els, trying to win for the first time in 2005. "I guess you are never too old to learn. You have got to respect the old game. I did try on each of those putts."

Jimenez was at 16-under 200 and will be paired with Els on Sunday.

Colin Montgomerie, ranked No. 63 and seeking to get into the top 50 to secure an invitation to the Masters, fired a 6-under 66 and trails by three.



Phil Mickelson, who has led nine consecutive rounds in stroke-play events, has played 36 holes at Doral in 14-under, one shot off the tournament record.

Han leads LPGA event in Mexico

HUICQUILUCAN, Mexico — Annika Sorenstam shot a 2-under 70 on Friday in her first competitive round of the year, leaving her four strokes behind leader Hee-Won Han in the MasterCard Classic, the first LPGA Tour event in Mexico since 1975.

Moiria Dunn trails the leader by two after a 68. Patricia Mourier-Lehoucq, Brandie Burton, Giulia Sergas and Gloria Park opened with 69s, and Cristie Kerr and Carin Koch were in a group at 70.




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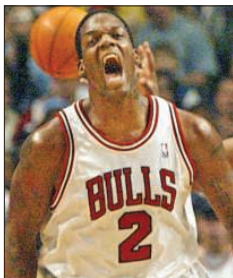




SPORTS



Race teams for Penske, Andretti figure to be front-runners during IRL season, Page 28



Center Eddy Curry, above, leads the Bulls in scoring with a 15.5-point per game average. Chicago's renaissance has been led by a defense that holds opponents to 42.2 percent shooting, second best in the NBA.

After an extended free fall into futility Chicago is excited about hoops again

BY NANCY ARMOUR
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Go to a Chicago Bulls game, and it's beginning to look like the good old days.

The United Center is rocking, with loud, passionate fans packing every seat. Even that third level of boxes, so high up in the rafters they may as well be on the roof, are occupied. Team gear is back in fashion, too. There's no shame in busting out that Bulls sweatshirt, and it's OK to replace an old-school Michael Jordan jersey with something more current.

After six years of mind-numbing futility, when the only thing left to play for at this time of year was avoiding last place, the Bulls have come roaring back. With one of the most remarkable turnarounds in the NBA, Chicago is on the verge of making the playoffs for the first time since 1998.

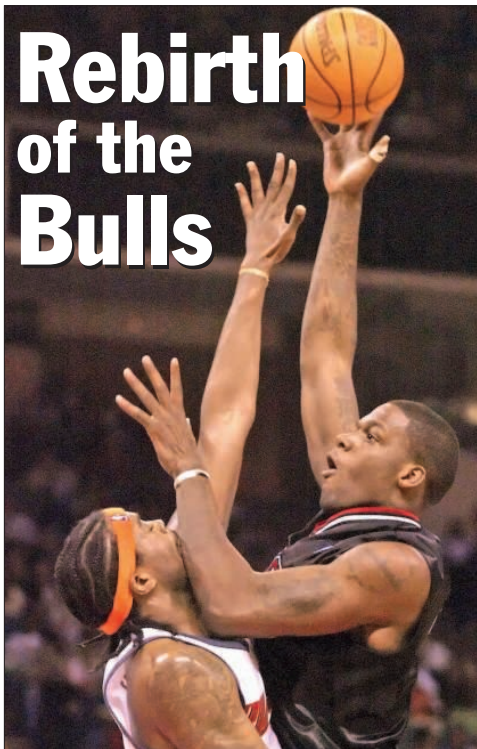
"The Bulls are so much fun to watch," said Mark Grogan, who brought his 12-year-old daughter, Eileen, and 10-year-old son, Patrick, to Tuesday night's game. "People are really excited."

And, to be honest, a little stunned. The Bulls have been abysmal since Jordan and friends won the last of Chicago's six NBA titles. They lost 341 games from 1999-2004, so inept they made even the Los Angeles Clippers look good. They're on their third coach since Phil Jackson left, and so many players have come and gone they could form their own league.

So when the Bulls began the year 0-9, matching the franchise record for the worst season-opening stretch, even some players thought, "Here we go again."

"I will admit I had that feeling," Tyson Chandler said. "But after we started winning, I knew we would consistently do so."

Rebirth of the Bulls



Chicago's Eddy Curry, right, shoots over Charlotte's Melvin Ely during a game last week. The Bulls (29-26) are one victory from matching their highest win total since Michael Jordan left the team.

The turning point came Nov. 24, when the Bulls beat the Utah Jazz. Not only was it their first victory, but it snapped Chicago's 37-game, six-year losing streak on its annual November western road trip.

"When we won that game, that gave us some confidence," rookie Ben Gordon said. "We got our first win in so-and-so years. That was something positive to build off of."

The Bulls won five straight in mid-December, their longest winning streak since Jordan's last season. They were 20-8 from Jan. 1 to March 1, second-best in the NBA behind only the defending champion Detroit Pistons.

With 29 victories heading into the weekend, they already had surpassed last year's total and were just one victory shy of matching their high-water mark in the post-Jordan era.

They entered the weekend as the sixth seed in the Eastern Conference.

Granted, the East is weak. But Chicago went 11-4 against Western Conference teams after that ugly November road trip. Included in that collection was the team's first victory at Dallas in eight years, and its first sweep of the Minnesota Timberwolves since the 1996-97 season.

"Even though we started off losing, it wasn't the same kind of losing that we had been doing the past three years and I definitely felt... we still would, at some point, turn things around," Eddy Curry said. "Kind of hard to say I thought we'd be where we are now, but I definitely felt that we were moving in the right direction."

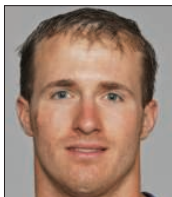
The Bulls didn't have much of an identity or a plan when general manager John Paxson

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